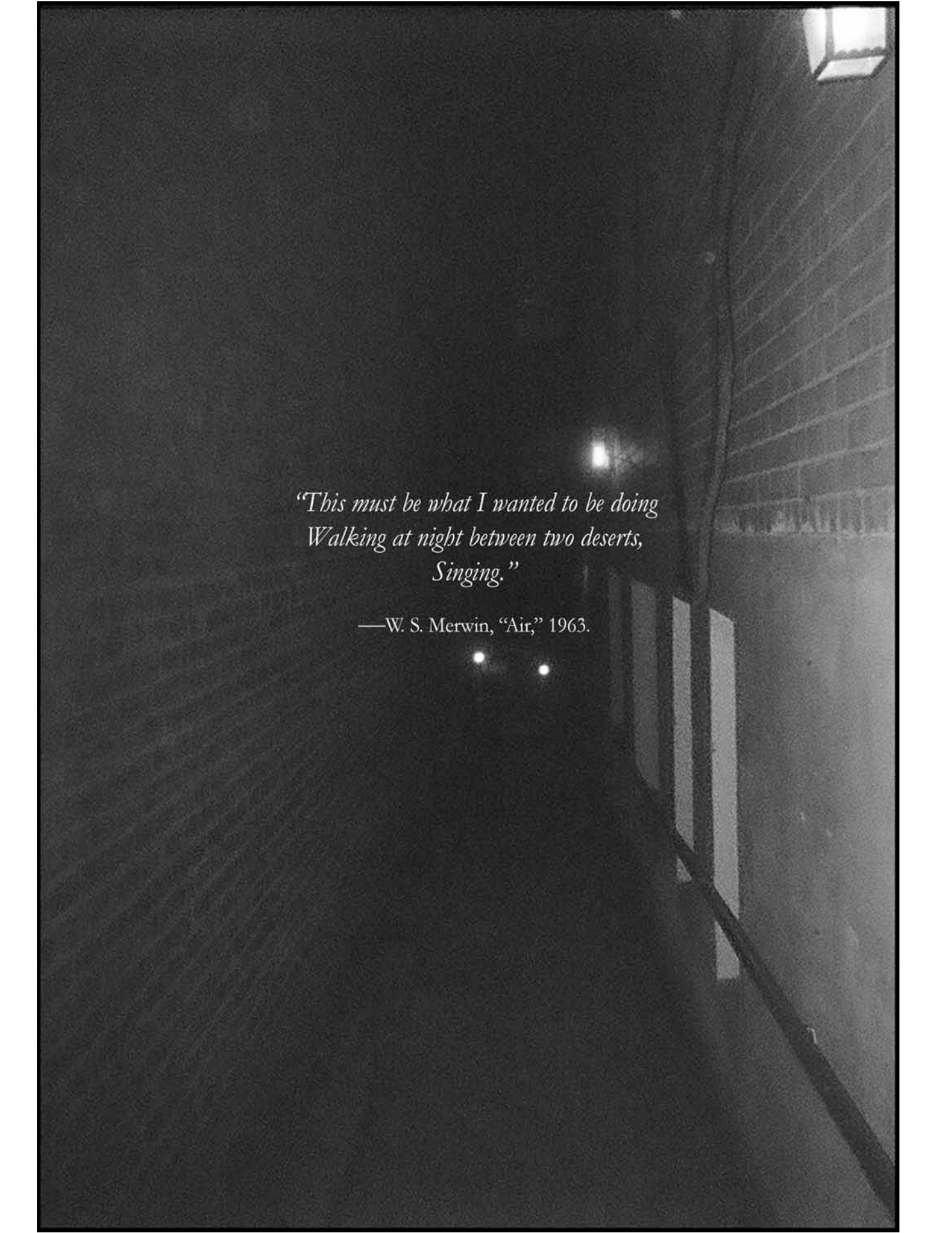


A vibrant, colorful illustration featuring a central figure with a large eye and a rainbow body, surrounded by various mythical creatures like dragons, phoenixes, and unicorns, set against a background of clouds, stars, and a rainbow. The central figure has a large, stylized eye with a blue iris and a yellow pupil, and a body that is a rainbow. The figure's arms are raised, and it appears to be holding a small object. Surrounding the central figure are various mythical creatures, including a green dragon, a phoenix, and a unicorn. The background is filled with clouds, stars, and a rainbow. The overall style is highly detailed and colorful, with a focus on fantasy and mythology.

13th Anniversary Issue
Number 64 ✱ April 2008



*"This must be what I wanted to be doing
Walking at night between two deserts,
Singing."*

—W. S. Merwin, "Air," 1963.

From Soulard's Notebooks

April 30, 2008
9:43 p.m.
Jaco Bell, 21st & Burnside-
my table
Portland, Oregon

Welcome to the 13th anniversary
issue of The Cenacle, & this, the final
piece of writing composed for its pages.

We troubled over what to write
here, how far into an "Editor's
Introduction" I might go, or wish
to go. Little of that in the 50 issues
these past Baker's dozen of years.

A letter? Er... maybe, sort of.
Direct, intimate, with precedent in
previous issues, though each was to
a specific person, not an unknown
reader.

Even now, the urge to stop, & its
war with a stubbornness to continue,
stubbornness - & curiosity. What
might come?

A story, then, of how I used to
live in this city, in a poorer section
than this one, but come to this,
Jaco Bell & coffee-houses nearby. I'd
eat their Mexican pizza here. I was
poor so my diet was cheaply tasty.

2

Years pass, I left Portland & eventually returned, with my wife, for visits, then with her & a new job, one that allowed us to live near here.

But I still come here, I still write here, I am still some version of that old self, of much older selves still that led me here in the first place.

34th anniversary of The Cenacle "introduction" written here, mixing my history editing it with my history of coming here to write. Mixing old & older & new.

The Cenacle used to be created on typewriters & reproduced with photocopies; now it's made with computers & laser printers. My writing in it still originates in notebooks. Back pens & paper. Notebooks old & better by the year, like me. Maybe purer, closer to the source, maybe further away. Both, or neither.

When I used to sit here, back in the winter of 2002, there had been a Cenacle, I would be one again, but at that moment, not much. I tried to make one but it took a

-3-
near to finish, other side of the North American continent. So there's a sweetness in this, weaving then & now, some promise not articulated but finally kept.

From 1995 until 2001, The Cenacle was published for a small group of friends who would meet eight times a year at a restaurant called Roma in New Britain, Connecticut. It contained the work of this group and this group was its readership.

When it continued later, that group was dispersed & I'd come back West. Yet I like publishing, in part because I don't seek any other avenues for my writing to disseminate. So, I kept alone & happily there have always been a few people who would contribute to these pages. Burke, Haggis, Dillon, among others. New ones would come, sometimes go. It continued to mean something even detached from a group.

Recently I found enough people around Portland to begin having meetings again. Meetings at my own home this time, not far from

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here. Would I have imagined back in 2002 that I'd ~~leave~~ here, sad & poor, & come back, & renew The Cenacle & renew bringing it to literary gatherings & do so at my home not far from here? I don't know. He was living another part of my life, a town far across the state.

Oh, yes, the Internet. When I had no group, I learned how to make The Cenacle in electronic form & put it online. Recently, I purchased the rights to the scriptorpress.com domain name. I now own it, or at least rent it year by year. Oddly, I'd tried to buy it years ago, & found out someone else owned (or rented) it. So, eventually, eyes may be reading this on a computer screen, in another country, maybe smiling, or thinking how the fuck do I find such weird shit online at 4 a.m.?

So this issue will find such eyes somewhere far, but also pairs of hands at my next literary gathering: Jellicoe Literary Guild. It's been, in fact, since June 2001 that a new issue of The Cenacle has shown up at a Jellicoe

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Guild meeting. Nearly 7 years! I was on the lip of a long incline that month, just lost my job, about to lose my heart.

And yet - and yet - here I sit, writing, here I am writing in this place, still here, Cenacle still here, Taco Bell still here (Mexican Pizzas still here though I don't eat them much anymore), Portland still here. Grateful, a little worn, still fucking hungry in every way, still ached with ghosts.

13th anniversary issue of The Cenacle, I yes, wow, but I look back way further, know the day I value most is not my birthday, April 28th, just come again, ~~the~~ but May 4th, soon due. May 4th, 1974, is when I began to write, aged 10, a journal I still keep, & a newspaper not long thereafter. That's where The Cenacle comes from, a lonely child who read books & thought of computers by way of Star Trek. These pages are the berries of those roots.

I am glad The Cenacle has made it to 2008. This year is a noisy, crazy,

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transformative one. It's rarely been more apparent how much the enemy of hope is not foremost despair, but fear. Control wars freedom, as altruism does xenophobia.

But I'd simply use some of Ken Kesey's words here, in variation. The future is a bus going elsewhere than any of us have ever known. Some would prefer we not go, prefer we stand around the bus stupidly arguing, prefer, in truth, we ignore the bus, the future, chance, hope, & just stick tight in history's lifeless, frozen mud.

Fuck that. Again: Fuck that. Go tell them: fuck that. There's a seat on the bus for anyone willing to ask, climb on board. Those who don't can have their mud, their fear. Til we find immortality, til we arrive somewhere profoundly not here, in our minds or literally, this world ~~is~~ what ~~we~~ we have. Hope is our gift, more than memory. That bus says "Hope" on it in big letters. It's waiting me, & you too, each of you. Let's hurry—

4-30-2008



13th Anniversary Issue
Number 64 * April 2008

Edited by Raymond Souland Jr.

Assistant Editor: Cassandra Souland

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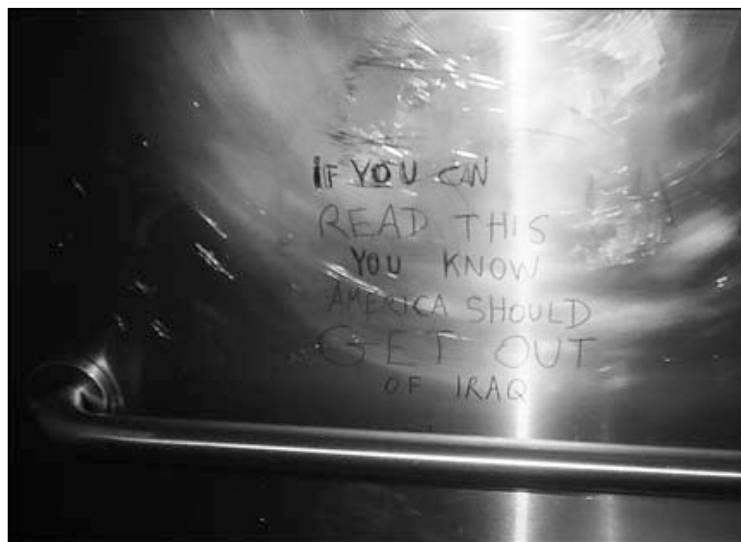
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Thanks to Kassi and new members of the revived Jellicle Literary Guild, all of whom made the recent meeting, first since December 2001, such a great success. Here’s to many more gatherings! Thanks to the millions of people who have helped bring Senator Barack Obama to the brink of the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination . . . **Yes We Can!** Lastly, this issue is dedicated to the memory of my father, Raymond Edmond Soulard, who passed on recently, I hope to better places than the hospital bed he suffered in too long. I love you, and I will always miss you.



Joe Ciccone



Deep Intellect, Daily Raisins, or the Counter-Clockwise Clock

Which of these three have I passed on to you,
my darling-of-the-morning, swinging near and far?

My mind's eye wakes and sleeps in American time,
where factory hours break it down and build it up again,

until dreams that would excite become work that earns
and all we see are the ties that bind.

Through stone and fire and the cold dawn
I held fast to the thread of a child's mind,

and now my child I give that hope to you.
Brain of our brain, heart of our heart,

may you stake a wage in the here and now,
but always fly to the sweeter places in your mind.

Teacups and sugar plums and little silver plates,
shotguns and hammers, and thousand dollar gates—

these I'll show you while I'm here,
although someday you will travel these roads alone.

Clocks move forward, raisins are not that good,
and intellect is a term used by the blind.

*Idiot-Face and Martyring the Black Drum Wristband
(Because why not)*

By and by the heroes leak their secrets,
through the cracks in their tombs and up the sidewalls.

Many have died,
though fame and want have stung us all.

Ropes hang from the necks of the living,
while bodies sink through black water.

I once played harmonica in that green,
then I dreamed I drowned.

I traded tokens and rode the carousel,
heard the whine of the steam-driven day.

I slept my way into shackles,
yet I glimpse freedom in my child's eyes—

the more-or-less of how-and-when,
and why there's no need to plug and prod.

In a fluorescent haze I earn my pay,
crack and freeze through the night, and the day,

racing toward the thoughts of fear and age,
far from the games I can no longer play.

Summer Place

Through dim summer places I tote my crude mission,
beyond the drumming in the blank harbour,
to a time when sky-horses were plunged inside their moons.

But I spend these days trying to forget the harbour,
and the bouyant strains of birds that promised me everything
in their college suits as they lectured on Donne.

Inside the walls of youth the most wicked battles are fought;
where shades of hair matched the hair inside my computer.
In horizons of clear fluid I donned a rusty needle.

High atop the lights that crowned the squeaky buildings I deranged.
I deranged in winds that blew cold but I could not feel them.
I deranged with friends that met me there and led me further.

Then what did I do?
I picked a single note and built a song around it.
I heard a siren wail so I burned an entire city.
I closed a laughing can to hear the darkness better.
I bled into a well already full from bleeding.
I sent for someone who had also sent for me.
I carried a pen that burped and stuttered.
I watched a house leap into the ocean.
I built a telephone of wax.
I cried acid tears.
I broke down.
I spoke.

A Dream Life

It used to be that dreams were better,
a place through which to walk free or fly.
While life was garbled and dim,
sleep brought clearer pictures and half-decent scenes.

Since I met you sleep's solace no longer calls;
your eyes alone are what soothe.
My paradise exists in the here and now,
in your touch, and in the promise of a family.

These days I'm lonesome in sleep,
even though you lay beside me.
I no longer feel at home among
the crude shadows and shades of dreams.

If paradise exists, it comes in waves;
when you walk through the door I am saved.
This is how it will be,
until we know each other only in dreams.

Crossing Over

What lies in the frozen ground
distracts us—

The broken, bloodless limbs,
stitched lids,

blind stones in a blue-black field.
The numbers grow,

day upon night,
while searchlights go out along the skyway.

And my countrymen, in numbers,
run bleak and harried,

down highways capped in morning light,
toward left coasts and the promise of sleep.

Choirs of sewn lids, strange as planes,
fall from other skies;

now is the moment when hope goes,
and the idea of rain.

Black Cadillacs move through the night,
looking toward the end of things.

Children bounce their balls off
dumpsters full of poetry, same as before;

mute carousels creep into the darkness,
wait for a second chance.

Everything to which I planned to return
lays in the snow at supper time.

My highwaymen, in numbers,
purposeful in their work pants,

get lost in the ends of my eyelashes.
I build a circle around myself, let it go.

By the time I reach the top of the stairs
it will be summer.

Horizon, Blue Field, Steel Rising
(Regarding a drive through Iowa, January, 2004)

Rock Island Line caboose, so strange in a diner back-lot
 on a midwest winter afternoon.
 It must've flown in and died in the night,
 and still I'm wandering, four years later,
 along the memory of this memory,
 before the flood and the wine and the promise made me over.

"Handsome Molly" was the song sung in the motel evening.
 "Shut the fuck up!" was the response, barked
 like an quarterback's audible from the next room.
 I had driven that Jeep far into the sky;
 the haystacks had faces painted on them but said nothing.
 Something silver rose toward heaven.

I raced toward my life, thinking,
 "Where is my love tonight?"
 I left my youth on the highway's naked shoulder,
 sitting alone in a fetid courtyard, with a warm six-pack,
 clouds moving purposeful across a fair prairie sunset.
 Something got scared and ran under the bed.

I was moving into a more manageable theme,
 old friends fading backwards into darkness,
 but not forever; friendship is the endless circle.
 The next day I would ride those roads a man,
 toward my soul, safe with my bride.
 Lonesome highways still call; my love knows I listen.

Old Friend
(for Ray)

Old friend where are you?

Can you hear my thin voice rising from the page,
same familiar tone, gasoline-driven, dusty as you once knew it?

I dare not explain the breakdown, brother,
that led me from you.
I have not become poet enough for that.

I mean simply to tell you this:
you have walked beside me,
lumbering graceful, tall long-haired lunatic,
attaché of spirit-dreams over your shoulder,
through this dream of life we've shared without knowing it,
wordless and uncertain.

I do hope you're thriving,
or at least no worse off than before.
as for me I'm still throwing my boot between the elevator doors,
just before they close.

Fact is, they're the same old boots, frayed gray
from ten years of walking.
My daughter wears them now,
as she plays the mandolin,
blowing clumsy on an old harmonica rack,
trying to sing Woody songs.

Do you remember my girlfriend?
she has become wife, keeper of the dream, mother to my child,
painting for me the dreams I now chase,
stubborn in the frozen cold, long before sunrise.

My grandmother, in her 94th year,
got behind the wheel of her white Cadillac,
and in silent dignity drove all the way to heaven.
Now she sets out linguine and white clam sauce
on a table of clouds.

Not a day goes by I don't think of you, my champion,
and wonder where we would go from here,
if given the chance.

Old friend tell me your light still shines, golden and hopeful,
in a place I can reach tonight, with my tank nearly empty,
on this weird American highway.

* * * * *





Raymond Soulard, Jr.

Why? [a new fixation]

What answer is enough, does not shift to cloak its incomplete, or cluster in chorus among angled lights & bitched sounds, compel a pressing mind to turn elsewhere, & again elsewhere, & still again, suck on the cage & call it air, freedom less & less but never none, & comes the dusk & night's smooth unveil the slave's dream pitches higher & more, something tonight will reveal, some hand its new jewel, some face its first whole thought, the drums beat faster, conjure a gesturing hand with their rhythm, there! regard the chaos of the visible world giving way to the unaccounted power of the invisible one! There! The sky opens door through its stars & distance! Lift toward it!

A breath & a beat & again among notebooks & pens in another city, another raw joint of dirty tables & lukewarm food. Burn it down & a week later even its ghost does not remain. Any answer than can bite & bloom here is something worth the regard. No moon in view, no fire & wild heave of moving crying bodies, work any answer through the crust & maw of such environs & see what remain.

Choosing to set pen & paper moving again, fill moments with words & call it a chase after meaning, call it the only work, ask whither next & why? Ask, & again, & the pages fill & if true this book called from inner skies, heart's full moon, mind's hardest galloping night, will matter, will strike the strange bells of the world & make them ring, the music a great harmony of soul & pen & the high sought, full miracle again, will it happen?

Universe, allow this book into being, let it matter, I offer my trust & hours to its making, begin it with hope & humility, loose myself to chance & persistence, & the unknown ahead.

ii.

Another night, someone called the world illusion, again, I read his words calling the world illusion & he pointed to the bookstall & said, "go on, find out some more," it was funny, like a brief nosebleed, & I walked into the bookstall, it was plastic & crookedly set in its foundation, recent & not perpetual, mold in the corners coming on again, patient, unceasing, rust on the plaster walls, webs through the ceiling, windows rippled with an older power than a battery of men with hammers & flexible beams can hold long against.

I looked for the book on many shelves but nothing revealed. This is my problem. The mold & webs & ripples tell a story I must hear, & the books rarely do. The books tell what it's like to be human when I find myself wondering about everything else, what it

would be like to be a dying creature tonight, think with some other manner of brain, speak with some other kind of tongue.

I dreamed my way across a continent & cannot yet figure what it is I've found. The newspaper boxes say Seattle to me where once they said Boston, once they said Hartford. What am I doing here? Can a new heave into the depths of Art help me to know? Can I give more this time?

Here as elsewhere people talk of inconsequence & call it a day, half-awake, waiting, this is all there is yet an infinity presses within our temples nearly all the time, how to reconcile these, if at all?

How indeed but give more to these pages, work for the spark, the flash that explains all for a moment if not perpetually.

The night is pretty here as elsewhere & I believe right now as ever in things wordful & otherwise.

iii.

I dreamed about a woman not see in twenty years, curly youth in long smile & pink tights, taught me how to write bad poetry, I worked on the rest, I saw her mother & sister too, I doubt either liked much the skinny tramp I was then, in this dream as dirty & unwelcomed as then, how do such remembrances affect who bear them? Or did I not really matter much at all? Was their dead husband father all that really mattered? Intense years, those, unhappy outside of my imagination yet youth's unshaking gold is untapped future, the somedays collected little-realized around heart & mind, in this dream she was old yet flicked me around with yesteryear's ease & I look back & ask these pages would I have done better to have let her go years before I did or is that how one learns to love, by chasing, by wishing, by hearing the beloved's name in every yearning song on the radio, & if I could tell that boy how to win her would I? I still feel his pain, this dream reminded me that time hardly exists real among the soul's ruined places—

later she fucked a dark man as a form of vengeance, hips raw riding unloving cock beneath dark beams & red stars, I watched from some disembodied hiding place, remember this, some truth in this hard sex act, heaps of crimson scarves on the floor, her teeth bite at the air, her hands bloody his shoulders, remember this

—a hard dream—I've determined to have at them, become an oneironaut & create one too—we'll trade tales—his hair will be short, he'll be tattooed—he does this for a living—I'll call him Benjamin—he's the first.

Somewhere else the day blows hot & fierce, I want to spread me around til the pain of compassion lessens—the night cools til a warm native to love's true touch, & I walk awhile with others, the world is not so hard tonight, the dreams are loud but distant, the fires are in every direction, sacraments eaten are lifting within til I cannot remain with my companions who do not really exist, & hiding in my canvas hump only launches me up, to places, no-places, far away & how higher, up, up, I do not have to return, the offer made other times fresh before me, I am nobody, it nearly feels good, I nearly wish to, someone will find my carcass in a day or two maybe, do I have to return? I ask years along did I return? Did I have to? What am I doing here? Why?

iv.

I call him Benny Big Dreams. He takes a shot every morning after his dreamwork is done—"Best n worst of the day outta the gates."

"What's the shot for? Diabetes? Smack?"

"That's my business for now. You're new to me. I'm careful."

"You're new to me too."

"True. But I have some studying on you to do."

"Studying how?"

"Time & space are masks for simples. Consensual reality is the masque they attend all their years & call it a life."

I nod. A joke, & not, we both know.

"Well, you're scratching at the mask & looking for the windows outside the simples' ball."

"I've *been* out there. There are no masks, no masques, no simples."

He nods. "And yet here you are, here you remain. Writing still in a simple's language, living a simple's life. Dressed up like a simple. So I'm not sure of you. I'll have to dream on it."

That's Benny Big Dreams.

I thought about this book called *Why?* for awhile. Wrote poems about it. Tried & failed it a few times. It is permeating my life & that's what I wanted. Whither bound? What tis? I don't know. It's a book, sheaf of lined pages in an old red binder labeled *Nuclear Regulatory Commission Training Manual Supplementary Materials, Sep. 1978*. Not really.

Drift from words, watch a night lamp watching the highway. Interstate 90 runs down the West Coast, Seattle, Portland, further north & south, never ceases its traffic.

I people this nightbus with multiples of me in every seat, the music in my ears, every head's ears, comes from a small white plastic gizmo—a band called Flaming Lips, blah blah

Simple's language. Simple's life.

Dressed up like a simple.

Benny nods. I wonder what he shoots up. The night reigns wet & white

One day I will no longer take this bus but will remember it. How I shoved my pen along on exhausted midnight rides & wouldn't let it stop, words, barks, mewlings, whatever I could get out I did & did. & did. & did.

v.

I watch him play his drums, disappearing among his mates disappearing among him, his kit extends his intentions & plays him, man & drum contour each other, I listen closely & find a scatter & fall, infinite repetition of arcs, sounds inevitable, fanning cascade of rhythms, one, two, many, within the music there is no interior, it does not end, nothing explains, high grows higher, deep further, it does not end, something here to hook into, the music which does not end, not a culture or a king or a priest, not war or a death, what here in this?

He plays drums without reserve, weave here fury & there subtle, sweating harder happier, this band, some band, every band, better than the best pissing drunk you could conjure up, mate, better than shagging a few of the best in the audience later on every night fun but ends the beat in my head never ends I hear it in my fingers all the time it's hunger & feast both more than love or hate, some feeling of life that matters, that the shite was worth it & won't be the winner in the end, not the way this feels, the shite *can't win*

vii.

Looking more widely round I see a man with a hatchet in a deep-snowed wood. Chop. Chop-chop. The quiet woods echo & re-echo with metallic cracks, air very cold, clear night to shiny, creatures watch from shadows & branches, the sound & scent of this man familiar, his movement unhurried, & yet he is a man so something tense exists in the area, he feels & accepts—

His name is John & he lives nearby—the wood is for his cabin's stove—he lives alone & has for awhile—he is paid to watch the wood on this private land a strong man claims by human deeds—

They have an agreement, it came at a bar on the last night John's lips tasted alcohol—

“My land is mine—I don't dispute over this. I keep it for its beauty & for other purposes. There are places on it none but the invited go. There are others none but I go.”

John nodded & sipped hard. Had he gone home that night he would have ended his mortal life. Young & passionate & lost.

Night drifts in, the snow follows, the tavern heats bodily deeper, the drinks pour along the bar, a lingering still point, John remembers other nights in other bars, regretting the dimming flavor in recent years. Too many blackouts, too much tangled drunken slumping sex.

“The woods are a good place to clean out the mind's clutter.”

John nods.

“My gut tells me you're a good man who's developed a limp in his mind. Worse, I think you're growing used to the limp.”

Nods again.

A cell phone flips open & a mumbled instruction. “The car is pulling up front. Finish your drink. Or leave it.”

He sips then stops. His companion exchanges a word & a chuckle with the barman & they depart.

viii.

What I want to know is how to think other, how to be other, how to shake it new, how to spend the hours like every moment is creation's first, always arriving—

I struggle not with words but what to do with them, it's not enough to fill up pages when it seems the world is no better for its millions of covered pages. No, I want to know else, words that transmute, words that refigure—

Words thus far not enough flesh, not enough sky, there must be deeper, break wide, pages burning in the hand alive with making not result but cause—

I keep trying, keep my pen moving every day, let work up a fury in my head & blow it out on page, keep trying no choice what stays is what keeps, good or ill—

I trust Art is an open door & ever there for me, trust & hope, & do the work, & do it, & do it—

The Universe keeps me & I write, I call this life.

ix.

The Artist is female, what else would she be, my counterpart, my other, her other, as years go by she moves less by my strings & I enjoy her more for this, the unknown is life's greatest allure, its most biting hope—

She wants to drink with me & I say no, laughing. She regrets this, some things only a wine-glow can reveal, so she maintains. She turns to her pipe & I am more agreeable.

The pipe looks like a dark brown crag, glints, light in the hand, deep clean draw, the hash is good, sweeps in on the breath & sends blood & bones shuddering smile with high—the music becomes palpable, rests & leans about the room, flavors its shadows, shifts among rug and ceiling & furniture connecting patterns, fuzzing the window's view, lessening the ever constricting press of time.

“You’ve written many books. Why this one?”

“It passes my hours.”

“That doesn’t answer me.”

“No, it doesn’t.”

“Why this one?”

“I’m trying to decide exactly what you are.”

“Do you know?”

“Not yet. I would just like to know.”

“Because?”

“I spend many hours on these pages. I’d like to know if I’m around old ghosts.”

“Are you?”

“Maybe.”

“Who then? You’ve got many choices.”

“Someone I want around, someone I have something left to speak to.”

“Will I be anything else?”

“Yah. Of course.”

x.

Sometimes it’s small things to do or not. Gestures, responses. Smiles can lie as well as anything else. Words are even worse, cosseted up for formal, political, social, even intimate use. Servants, docile, restrained. Believe any with risk.

"Then why do you do this?"

"They draw me. They're familiar. I conjure good as I can with them, I try to be true to best intents."

"Conjure?"

"I feel at times I can blow up with them & should do it every night."

"Why don't you?"

"I don't think the answer is in words or in silence but in transfiguring the world . . ."

"With words?"

"I thought Art was the answer, the path, the way, but to what or where?"

Not release from life or to life, grasp for death or its repudiation,

xi.

Hartlee laughs at me, not a cruel laugh, but that of a wizened guru, something of the old friend returned to me in these pages. The tough, smart blue eyes, wiry, feisty with high knowing.

"You took a lot. It kicked your ass. It happens."

I nod. It does.

"Cut the dose or figure it out better next time."

"Learn to steer. It's so simple."

He strums his guitar & I feel his spiritus flow into his instrument & sparkle pretty high chords outward. I would sit on the couch, boxy frame like a coffin, he had his seat near his computer. Books on the floor, shelves; the ones on mushrooms, the ones on plagues.

"Don't worry," he says. "Remember for next time."

I nod. Seems all the old ghosts are invited to this party. So be it. If it's to be a freak gargantuan of a tale, so be it.

Tap. Tap. Perhaps the only way to lighten the traveling bags is to spill out their contents & give each a moment of light & attention. The past has noisy persistent aspects, none to do but see what they want, if even they know.

xii.

Someone hidden, maybe hiding, maybe in wet shadows, beneath a bridge, it's where he's slept the past few days, he's in a new place, no money, afraid, confused, but not completely. Allows himself a daily visit to the local soup kitchen run by the Catholic church, & a night-time walk to the library. A big building, he likes it. Books excite him even as he can't read more than a few pages at a time. Impatience, high-strung. Words simply fill up fast in him. Once full, he can't continue, won't. One security guard likes him, spreads among his peers word to leave this boy be, but watch out for him. Who knows anyone's reasons for anything?

"You got a home?"

"I'm OK."

"There's places."

"Yah."

"Say the word & I'll help you. I promise. I been there."

"Where?"

"Where you are. Young. Running. I had a thing for needles. And other things."

Others live near him, among campfires & sleeping bags. They know about him but nobody approaches. One did, to tell him about the soup kitchen, but after that they let him be. People have their own reasons. His are his own unless he shares them.

“Are you using?”

“No. I don’t do drugs.”

“Booze? You’re pretty young.”

“No.”

Left alone he picks up books by glow & vibe, the paper talks to him before the words appear. Different rooms too, since there are so many. The library has a lot of computers but he leaves these be. They are curious & people use them a lot, but he just leaves them be.

The night air is sweet. The church fed him, he seems to be a pet there too like at the library. He is quiet, slowly folding into himself for the night’s many hours to come.

A new figure comes by. Sits awhile near him. Does not say much.

“We’re all lost here,” he says finally. He hands over a crumpled brown bag, within containing a fair number of small dried asurescence mushrooms. “Keep these safe, take them a few at a time when you’re at crossroads. They don’t lie. Listen to them. Chew slowly. No alky. Just water.” Leaves. No judgement.

xiii.

Thinking poor scholar’s thoughts about Magick, seems to be in the seeming dull stuff of things drawn from the catalyzing ether, mixed by music, spell of lingual chant, something like a faith too, both that world exists & that world is not all, a quiver of desires & childly love of play, maya by its many lights, illusion, dream, play—

Magick in one word & then the next sometimes movement kin to dance, more than this, how the mystery still rides through every song, fair & flawed, call it Magick, presence of other, feel it in best moments, no explain for what or how—

Yet the wish to know it more, a flicker better, the thought of smoke as guru, shaman, & what tis, & why?

Told: patience. Told: work hard, work steady. Told: you know creation runs into invisible, into imaginary, into & seamlessly through many kinds.

I nod—

I remember lately nights of power, juiced by mind accelerants, by neon city furies, music hitting & again & harder, I’d run my pen from one half-lit trip den to the next, nests or near to for letting the words fire through me to my page & elsewhere—and I still feel it tonight—there’s no diminish or retreat—

another city, another year, I see some differences but simply yearn for more—thinking about Magick, it seems to me the Universe is a miraculous creature & no reason all its inhabitants should not be brilliantly supped & fulfilled—my race is often very small-minded, fearful, not trusting each other much less all of the non-human potentialities existing. Easier for most to

subject the world to a man-made cage or some form of subjugation—& a permanent sense of other, of world as transient, illusion, test, punishment—

Some refuse this way & reach around, not to capture or even explain but to widen sense of mystery, how great it is, how greatest thoughts struggle even to partially behold it.

xiv.

Remembering every tree I've neared & spoke & wished for, how they talked to me & kept me in lowest hours, how my promises to the Universe were told to them & I love them, wish to learn of them

feed on soil & sunshine & water to create fruit & nuts, wild vistas of color, sweet & hard

teach me, teach me

a night some years ago half-awake on a highway, van pulled over, trees titans above me—impossibly beautiful—other years on jet planes & even the sky did not lord over them—no, the power was there below me, but nothing harsh, nothing lordly, all open & invitation, beyond good, beyond night, beyond free—

Trees, beauty, desire, high, higher, from some root deeper than sexual, containing it, powering it, but deeper, the force connecting among all creation

What explains toothaches, lightning, & peppermint candy.

xv.

Dreams countless & years in a large building, maze, stairs, corridors, chase, wars, disaster, always running, always pursued, again, last night, what of it?

That waking, this strange bookstall cage life the dream? Helpless hoping.

No. Foolishness. Nothing less real than anything else, nothing less important or authentic. Each is all yet each maneuvers through all. One is here, nowhere & everywhere. One is I, you, all, nobody. Wherever humans have pressed universe for answers, firing wildly for godhead, peering at the minutest bits, eating its prettiest esoterica, these answers again & again.

"I am you & you are me &
we are all together"

What next? How to ignite a next—dreams can loop ceaseless, how to jack into waking's ceaseless drive, its impatient propulsion?

Sick tonight, it was brief cruelties & a few supped morsels that jumped my spark—so tis possible—

dreams can bite do & I want to know them better, tunnels, rooms

"born from drams to return anon" someone whispers—

"Benny?"

the voice does not soon return

if each is all then why sadness all over?

xvi.

Never was a question this story would arrive soon or sooner at Luna T's Cafe—she joined my life 24 years ago & comes along with me—Merry Muse, Rich Americus, Rebecca Americus-Soulard, Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker, Jim Reality III—yet how will they arrive? I look at old stories & cannot write their like again, am pushed, sometimes shoved elsewhere, conduit to a lifelong hunger for new, & can only insist they not be other than what they are in some down in the wordless sense—

Once in the City, later in Hartford, later still some kind of placeless, where Luna T's Cafe now? I live in Seattle yet I find my consciousness lives multiply, in memories, in hopes, the past not a uniform ended thing but a great live dark beast glinting with faces & hours, with stretches of world & days—

Luna T's Cafe exists in pages, & maybe in the minds of a few others than myself—but for me its existence has filled much of my life, created aspects of my identity, it matters & thus it changes through the years & I cannot write of it samely for I am not samely—

And what matter anyway? I've always believed that Art mattered no matter the audience—& for some years now what audience I had has dispersed—so what matter? Commitment to the pen & pages, to the hours spent with them, to faith in the . . . necessity in doing this, its inherent reward—

Never have I cared for much else, never has much else taken me to the wild places my pen has—& thinking it over that's where Luna T's is now—the wild places—a door still kept open to the bar where workingmen still come for a beer & an hour of TV—but it's now the wild lands that predominate

the question ending this passage must be: are there any wild lands left within my grasp, within, without, any that matter, can I still reach them?

xvii.

A mystery, a riddle, a chase, a maze, a journey, this, a pursuit? A psychotropic fairy tale? Metaphysical travelogue? Raw symphony, chocolate high arc of event & misdeed?

No answers. Called *Why?* & so be it. Kick it up, & now higher.

Tap, tap. New creatures & old await. Art ever the open door when faced with open heart.

Emulate world in ragged chaos & centerless whirl. Crazy for the sure pink thing & the tallest perches.

Story like what if & what is, some ways slipped in both

Someone always asleep, someone always awake, someone dying, someone coming along, bleeding, hurting, attacking, kissing, taking, spending, driving, urging to let self fall nearly all away to what & where & how elses, to when, to more,

See through eyes upon eyes from high strange buildings like cliff dwellings some year away or years or now or what—where the wild lands who will tell if best found in mind, dream, body, or wilderness itself?

Fixtion that fixes limitations & does away with them, nothing else left to do, come on, that's something maybe—

the waters stretch far out but will ever recede & return, the confessions cosmic & the confessions mundane, to nod over this, best Art stained with toil's hours & vista's dreams, I want to know it hurt & salved both, something sacrificed, something received—

xviii.

He owns nothing from day to day, refuses, even his clothes come & go from donation baskets & dumpsters, maybe other lives it was different but here he is in this one—yet feels himself belonging to the morning light & the wee hours' tinsel air—stars know him, trees pass him around city parks—

When spoken to he is usually soft & kind. Life is suffering, empathy, uncertainty—watch any freeway & see—from here to there & then otherwise—it does not end, it does not even slow—

I imagine him with a few tattoos & a bit of science knowledge—he eludes me as dangerous—a naming, befriending sort—

Yes, suppose so, lonely, worked up, loving but rare liking—the tears are in my blood—

Night works color for its own ways—by highlight, by subtraction—night is pantheistic, no single mind could have conjured all of its odd pretty wonders—

Nothing will return from another day—not much I'd wish for—I guess I couldn't stop though once commenced—

Things try to own him, however; the strange & beautiful tug of the church as he takes his day's meal, its offer of comfort nigh to answers, enough tempting for him to know he is being tempted. Or the fire others huddle near at night, laughing, the way two will share a meal or a cigarette. Even the library guards who watch out for him, slip him dollars unasking, curious over the books he spends more than a minute with. Humans push at one another & tug closer almost simultaneously. He feels it, how he breathes like those around him, how his heartbeat is like everyone else's no matter his rags or their finery—feels it in how his hands are unique but like all hands

xix.

Does the world open out with the years or collapse slowly, I don't know between gain & loss, & what of ongo? life intense then empty, splayed with strange, what meant the miles & years, what means anything at all?

Tired works it harder & slower until—but sometimes no & a shout holds it back, renews,

Years & faces & miles, what did they matter, why must this pen push along paper every hour I can, I've watched people bookless live it all excited as me, what did I miss? What did they? Trash rhetoric comes nothing

Sleep twists within & through until pen rouses & goes—there is nothing can take Art down but starts with some capitulation—be a bitch making it not another coward yawping over life's wastes—

life doesn't take it away—fools & cowards give it away

I do not wish to—

xx.

Beloved,

While you travel tonight I sit on the night coach & electric shadows flee by. I wonder at the night's ever-magick to keep me anew & along, the clean of night, the burn, the high, where does it go? Where do I go by daylight? You travel & the greater freedom of my hours is tempered by longing, by realizing that one's long-held lover & best friend affects ceaselessly by presence & absence. Yearn for you conjures you, of course, & my lingual-nutty mind touches this yearn curiously . . . is there Art in it? More lyric or more prose? How to transmute . . . it never ends.

The coach ride into the city is delighted by night's prowling monster presence but I could truly do otherwise happy with hours such as these. While you travel, your own night passing, I try not to dull with the familiar. Nay, thoughts of adventures I could have to share with you later tempt me.

*My pen moves, what matters, what I chase, what I give, what I keep—
this city downtown after midnight is empty of all but neon & hustlers, the coaches carry people through it elsewhere, & I wonder what long-made agreement led to such a late-night desertion?*

Hours at the wheel & my pen finally slows, I so long to melt into things & bring back words of essence—

xxi.

The world always with its doves & its lunatics, those half-buried mumblings into the dirt, other empty sparkles on the riled air

& I ask again: do the bastards really reign on every path, in ever ville, over sky & sea & wood alike? I ask because I'm not sure & I suspect no—but—

Look up & the whole bar cries out to the 4th quarter Super Bowl interception & the Patriots already up 10 pts on the Eagles—

I listen & for a moment care intensely again, remember faces blown up with delight, beers bought & drunk & spilled & shared, I remember because that is in part what one does, one remembers

chooses, shapes, embraces, lets go,
the past to service or slave, help build a deeper-boned kindness or resist on the shatter of old hurts,

chooses, shapes, embraces, lets go
I remember those faces with love, those shoulders & hands, tavern nights that led into moony vows of fraternity, that called beyond themselves, that yearned to be remembered, to matter after the glasses empty & the dreams washed in,

chooses, shapes, embraces, lets go,
I call tonight brutal with new, let its blood & matter wild the world, for I will not burn in daylight's next swallow, I call tonight a rising upon risings, a new language & a long hope, fresh, tight, eager, the lights higher, the harder dancing, worlds invented all about

choose, shape, embrace, let go

I leave the faces crying victory & the like, there are other places in Luna T's Cafe to be even as the faces at the bar were for a moment lovely with sentiment
choose, shape, embrace, let go.

I don't know how the game ended, & I don't know where all those faces are tonight, a fragment newly keeps them for a moment at best
(choose, shape, embrace, let go)

xxii.

Why? I don't know. Why? lights blink in the distance. Why? The day was hours with rain. Why? My beloved travels far & thinks of me. Why? People read books for answers their own hearts bear. Why? Music is an easier way to bear life's slow drown. Why? Chocolate & pussy. Why? Because one remembers & hopes from similar impulses. Why? I sleep alone tonight buried in the world's webby miracle. Why? It kills to stop asking. Why? Please stop asking. Why? Won't you stop asking? Why? Desire bites every fucking hour of one's life, let it, let it, o let it bite. Why? I don't know. Why? I don't know. Why? I truly don't know. Why? Because it must. Why? Because it will. Why? Because you can.

xxiii.

Sitting in the bandroom at Luna T's Cafe & Noisy Children jamming & higher hour after hour, many songs, one song, like shaped winds of joy, I listen & sometimes find myself moving in the dancing & someone hands me a pipe & the smoke is smooth & offers steps up inside my mind, offers with a smile, a glint & I go, feel myself going steps up in my mind & Noisy Children plays on & on the night beast's hours beauty mull fire murmur past & I think OK, try again, think love, try again think happiness, try again think hope & settle with this when a small bit settled on my tongue by a smiling face & the night big night is the crackless mystery & I am glad all these years haven't solved it for me o yes if God there be anything one could say yay there, it be in the mystery & its infinite ways of revealing without explaining

The dancing bodies close & closer a safety in the friendly sweat in the heats thrown about in praise & play & I am remembering moments so intensely I am no longer here completely

I am several completely now

I am walking a poor city in the winter & lost & lonely & in love & the world doesn't fucking care & yet I do insist it matters, it's what I learn that winter, that at bottom, in the most broken lights of one's soul *one must care*, find some hook, something, & this is not another person, it is the saddest truth I've been gifted yet I feel its potent, it's helped me to love some better & loathe some better, it's made me stronger to the wind—fisting through human places & more fragile to places elsewhere—

Once. Twice. Breathe. Relax. Ahh. The songs. My songs. My notebooks. They matter. I love them as evidence for me that I exist. Whatever to others, I exist to me.

Noisy Children will sometimes play it loud til dawn then slow & slow & slow, instruments higher than coins, players become conduits & elsewhere a bakery is bombed & elsewhere something pink grows full & snaps away to something else—

xxxiv.

"John, what is the world if not what's evident?"

"Meaning?"

"I don't call it illusion but I don't call it all."

"Nobody does."

"What then?"

"I don't know. What to do with things unseen? How can one account for the invisible?"

"Look around you."

I see a cabin. One large room with a curtained bed loft in one corner. We're sitting at a table, wooden like everything else. A lamp with a green shade & a pull-cord.

"Real within real"

"I'm making this up. All of it. It's pages in my notebook."

"Yes. You're not alone."

"It's all made up?"

"Go on."

"Earth isn't made up. Seasons. Blood. Gravity. Fossils."

"It's all the same stuff."

"Flesh & imagination are the same?"

"Does that not make sense?"

"World & world imagined?"

"Lots of imaginations."

"One is many"

"Many is one"

"Do trees make art?"

"Trees *are* art."

"Why do humans have to try?"

"I don't know."

"How much can be found in dreams?"

"Dreams seem another way in, or back."

"I want to know what to do."

He nods.

xxxv.

What to do. I suppose there are more answers than souls ever to exist. Sometimes answers intensely press for attention but no word, more runs of light down a midnight alley, a human smile, a tree blowing, out crows suddenly—sensations of a moment—dreams where I nearly break through—

Imaginal corridors reveal at night, walls, angles, electric stars twinkle down the freeway, the world two kinds of wilderness, alternating kinds of power, forms of complexity, the erotic coil in things looses, spreads, connects widely, dreams beyond stellar wield countless highs break hardest stone, lows wither to dust. What to do. Soul's best weapon twined awfully of faith & doubt. Night bids follow & learn new.

To Art? Some kind. New, old, perhaps best called a different pitch. Trust, yes, but more *necessity*. What I want. An art tough as bone, fierce as blood, long reaching muscle.

A word at a time. A few.

Flying. Praying. Kissing. Relinquishing. Kin of melodies passing angel through the heart.

Night again & wield an older instrument & wonder how it feels sweet & strong among fingers, I fall great within, press memory into other years & move again with a younger body, call each day a new beginning & how they pile up, the mind fats with years of questions & partings, ecstasies, repetitions, disappointments, little deaths, cracked hopes,

how many bus rides, how many reefers smoked, how much sunshine eaten, how many good & bad shits on how many toilets—

This story wants for its skeleton & its path & pending these will arrive, but some pages more in the wilds of mind, where direction is irresolute if existing at all—

Night passage call these pages, where horizons form by electricity or fire, where even the rudest brute may for a stretch cry hope & vow to his yearn whether or no the day finds him nearer—

What to do, pen's moving, a rhythm & melody tangled in the moment's acceleration, ask why? & nothing may animate alive to answer—

“Rebecca”

“I’m here”

“Wife”

“Still. Always.”

“How do I do this?”

“Like you always have”

“I don’t remember”

“You never do”

“Then how”

“Pen moving, rhythm & melody”

World something real & veil, yet mull
its comings & gones, what is sure? What
is true? Some would say God & perhaps
be justified in giving one name to many—
but some would not find this enough—

Something real & veil, hesitate in the dubious labyrinth of metaphor but so swathed in worship of night's wild magicks maybe no choice, I don't know, here is wielding of ancient root again, raise its spectral noise high & lone, why the universe & why love, ask & ask again, why exhaust from a truck & blood from a struck rabbit, why this hour with its simple name & that one too complex for the memory's surviving grind

raise the root again, raise it
high & mad, & bring it down now—
now—NOW!

I am sitting in an armchair in a coffeehouse I've crept to for weeks in a poor western city, & here I come with my dingy books & crumby countenance. Sometimes I buy, sometimes I don't. I find others hard going & we talk whatever comfort of suffering toward suffering

& I remember these nights long after, remember them viscerally like snow & sugar, remember the old man who traced every modern king & institution back & back to ancient empire, a race of madmen do I've known their many numbers who call the present hour an old crime's confessing blot

The music is hard & complex & unsentimental as I walk the city's streets where beggars lax & poor souls everywhere—

I remember a circuit I followed so many days, afternoons at the job center, wasted on computers, & a walk to the poorfolks restaurant sat in my corner with books, refilling my soda cup, sometimes I brought it back for days, & on to the five & dime for sweets, then the train into the city where I haunted the library for books & more computer time, & on to coffeehouses like this one staying til midnight when the dirty bus brought me back to my room.

Remember those nights too great for them to settle among the rest, what to do with them if anything at all—What to do & help me & I write & break this hard til open—

What to do. Go back & carry on, nothing else, remember without fear, anticipate without bars—

Nothing will be the same but while life there's hope, the human hustle resumes every day & anyone up or down can trade fortunes.

xxxvi.

He walked into Luna T's Cafe with his sack of books & his broadsword, sat down at the bar two seats from Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker, nodded & smiled at Mr. Bob the barman, ordered a tankard of mead.

"Nice bit of metal," one of the drinkers remarked.

"Keeps me good company when the nights & miles get strange."

"Must get pretty strange to need something like that."

"I'm a scout. I get sent ahead to recon."

"Scout for who? King Arthur?"

Laughter round the joint.

Smiling, says, "No, a clan of vikings."

"Vikings? Randy Moss? Fran Tarkenton?"

"No the *other* ones."

"Sailing ships? Pillaging villages?"

"No. Not really. My sword helps me to cut through fabrics of reality, get to the next. No pillaging. More . . . aid & comfort."

"Good vikings?"

Nods. Smiles. Stands, swings at the air three times three angles. A flap opens in the air. Snow, lights, herd of triple-horned beasts. Flap slowly closes of itself. Now gone.

The drinkers look at Mr. Bob. He shrugs. "How's your drink, Son?"
 The Viking sips & nods. "Secret ingredients." Mr. Bob nods.
 "Are you scouting this joint? It's sure weird enough for the likes of you."
 "We've heard stories. We thought to come along & see."
 "Would you like to see the owner?"
 He pulls a parchment from his rough leather vest. "Ree-bek-ah?"
 "Her dad owns it," says one of the drinkers. "That's his kid. Not so young anymore, I guess."
 Mr. Bob nods, holds up a finger to the Viking, & pushes into the bandroom.
 Noisy Children are on stage working something over, sitting in a loose circle.
 "Sorry to interrupt. Is Reb around? She's got a visitor."
 "Not here," says Rich. "I think she & Soulard are working out some new part of the Ampitheatre. Something about his Portland days."
 "He's let go of nothing," says Gretta, a smile, sad maybe.
 "Thanks," Mr. Bob leaves them & walks down a hallway that leads to other places, even more complex.

He finds us with notebooks & pens & paints & brushes in a half-conceived new place.

Reb runs over to hug him. "I'm glad you came."
 "What's all this?"
 "We're building Portland from 2002."
 "Oregon?"
 "The Ampitheatre is near here. Raymond wanted this to be near there."
 "Why Portland 2002?"
 "I can't get it out of my head. Those months there. I'm not done with them. It's better to go to them than be harassed."
 Mr. Bob nods. "Rebecca, a man is in the bar to see you. He looks a little rough but not harmful. I'm not sure what his business is. Shall I tell him you're tied up?"
 Rebecca looks at me. I nod, & she seals her small vial of Goddpink. She motions for me & I shake my head. "I'll be here. If you need me bring him here."
 She nods, kisses me holy wet love high, & leaves with Mr. Bob hands held.

I sit awhile wondering if the dream I had this morning of fixtional worlds old & new again can be made, can burst up in the world & behold it new & strange again.

Wonder. The mind leaves traces where it passes & carries traces along, it seems I can summon moments from those days easily, waiting for buses downtown, traveling to rotten jobs by rail. Nights wandering alone & always the hope of turning a magick corner, of getting the phone call that would stop the descent, I'm still there in ways I can't name, still trying to work it out differently, one more day—

The Viking looks at me & nods. "We all shake with terror sometimes, my friend."
 "It's not terror. It's some kind of pull, strong one, some magick I conjured those lonely nights, how could that be? What remains? The girl is gone, this is about me, the complex of hours I called my life for some months."

"Would you like me to come with you" he motions knowing to what Reb & I are making next to the Ampitheatre.

"Is that why you're here?"

"He's here to help," Reb says, still surprised I followed her shortly after she left.

“Could you see it with clear eyes? Clear but kind?”

“Yes. Both whenever possible.”

“What about your clan?”

“I’ll take care of them, Raymond,” speaks up Mr. Bob. Viking already likes him, smiles & nods.

Rebecca crawls me deep with kiss & hug before the Viking & I leave. Him & his sword & books. Me, my pen & notebooks, & I.

Night drinks me whole again & I wonder at home beloved like water & music & wifely pink cheeks. Sitting another carriage countless carriages recalling that city those months what ragged crush I have on those days & how they reverberate strangely even now.

Breathe. Relax. The people from those days are all gone from my life, gone each with a grievance, gone & I can’t conjure the sweet intimate words & looks of romance, of fraternity. None remain.

A few more fleeting creatures from then & the curiosity imaginal space invokes. Not fate but what if—

“Coming?” asks the Viking smiling with his sword & sack of books.

I nod. It was the nights then, that’s what hook I’m caught on. The days were jobless impoverished suffering, none else. The nights were different, still secret ribbons in my heart—

The Viking & I walking the downtown & I can see Rebecca did not finish it—so I do—not with her gift or grace but the streets are solid, the buildings visible, the sky passing—

“What can I do?”

“Be my witness.”

“Where there none?”

“Not really.”

He looks sad. His hair long & shaggy, his eyes blue, intelligent, warm. I like him, & realize he will protect me in every way he can.

“Thank you.”

“You come from good impulse, not just inside me.”

He nods. “You too.”

I feel about ready to begin this.

xxxvii.

There was a man on the bus into Portland, the last bus of several from Hartford, last hours of several days’ worth, & he learned of my writing & editing & told me his notion. Erotica for the incarcerated, way to couple up prisoners.

Portland approached & I did not know what I was coming to. I’d never been to it but by it on the freeway. My possessions rode with me in three bags & crate, the remain in a cellar back East.

He talked on & on. I look out the window & see the waterfall he is describing.

The Viking stands up in the seat behind me & I are reminded this is fiction.
 “Enough of this for now.” Agreed.

His sword slashes lower left to upper right, across, upper left to lower right, across, then a clockwise circle around the perimeter of the cuts. A perfect circular hole opens.

“Fancy.”

“Let’s go before it repairs.”

We leap through & are back at Luna T’s Cafe.

“That’s how it works?”

“One way at least.”

“What are we working toward?”

“Integration.”

He nods.

“It’s not just about me. It never was at its best.”

“That can be true.”

“How?”

“Release. Look around.”

“It looks old & familiar. People lifting up & putting down & calling it a day & a year & a life.”

“Anything else?”

“I don’t know. Some call it a war. Holy, political, cosmological, something else.”

“What do you believe?”

“I believe in Art.”

“And love?”

“Love manifests. It’s not something to believe in.”

“Art is?”

“I don’t know. Maybe neither are anything but work.”

“Art can be done alone. Love is live relation. Art is documentation, sometimes of Love. Love leaves effect but no evidence.”

“So what now?”

He looks at me. “I’m here to serve as companion & protector. I don’t have your map. We go as you will.”

“I brought an icon tonight” & hand him a black & white plastic pen labeled Portland Community College.

“Strange. Did you write with this?”

“No. I just carried it, by chance at first. Then later it was remembrance.”

“What do you want back?”

“Nothing I could have. I suppose this instrument is more a promise than a remembrance.”

“Promise to?”

“To not forget.”

I am there at that office where I sat at computer terminals all day long, jobhunting? No. I was chasing pussy through cyberspace. Dark sport of a lonely soul. Contrive erotic lingual fantasies & make them feel real, make them spasm with submission & release, bring pleasure to a stranger & then disappear, not free love but free fuck, no love involved—

I did it til it got too bad then I read & wrote for my life & that got bad & I would sleep when nothing else was left—

The Viking slashes at the computer terminal before me til the hole opens up & we throw ourselves through back to Luna T's Cafe

This isn't working well yet.

xxxviii.

I could lose the minutes, hours & years, & recall myself to other nights in vanilla-sweet air, to a courtyard where I sat writhing in the benign souls about me, remember it all til whatever now whatever is falls away near completely—

"It's not just about me."

"What then?"

"We need to go to where it matters."

"You're there already. The lava's all around. Hark."

"The revolution is everywhere always"

"Of course."

"What do I do?"

"Like always. Submit some. Resist some."

Luna T's Cafe moves West with me. The Viking nods. Lingers East too. He agrees. Any change then?

Rich Americus sits in his old green pillowed chair smoking a reefer. Ideas come to him in words & melodies. He lets them. He feels his time of mattering again coming around. The view is pink sky, & some snowtipped peaks. Nice.

The resistance too is everywhere, always. Someone presses down, someone shoves back. A little too loud, & again.

"It matters, Rebecca. All this."

"It always did."

xxxix.

Breathe, relax. The vehicle is up & away, fuel plenty, structure holding. It's ragged & freak but see it go.

Another breath & a beat & again the raw joint with the dirty table & lukewarm food. Some continuity drew me here tonight, picking up the noise thrown out awhile ago & slinging it on. Call it a report card some thick of pages along.

Whither next & why? Higher sparks, flung round greater, because I can again, because I've dog hard at this to get something back & then further.

One makes Art from one's depths in collaboration with the world's many effects. Art both sings & replies.

Universe, my new prayer wishes this book to bloom its best intents, its ideals, its gift. Building up craggy & improvisational, nonetheless bearing shadows both smooth & fucknuttty. At this place & page, it is stable but not yet the big, good, necessary being it wishes for. Hardly a prayer here but for its green to keep coming & its blood to stay clean.

A night fine & cool. Vagrant with an outheld hand guards the door & repeats & repeats. The world is hard but for its many exceptions of soft. Or vice versa?

xl.

Noisy Children is making a new album & then going on tour. Well, well. Things *do* change, don't they? & change & change again.

Well, well.

"It was time. We have new songs & we need some new spaces & places to explore them Stephanie brought up to me. She's been very patient. She's right. Now is likely better than in a long time. She said it's been so long it will be like a new challenge."

"Is Franny coming?"

"I think so. Chuck & Rebecca can run the cafe."

"Are you happy?"

Americus looks at me a long time. Stands. "I'll miss you too." Smiles & returns to bandroom.

Well, well.

Noisy Children on tour & I'm not going except, perhaps, as disembodied storyteller. Old school. Heh. I dreamed this story idea this morning. Benny Big Dreams nods.

"Now you can say the story's begun."

"Will it work?"

"It will give you some options. Write near or far. Been awhile, eh?"

I feel sad not going. Like a jam is indeed loosing. Even solipsism ain't what it used to be.

"So you'll have to figure out how to do it differently."

"How?"

"You figured out it was needed. More will come."

xli.

It was no old job, years back, & I've dreamed it before, the old faces, & a sadness in absence I've rarely felt since, I left unfriended, a pariah, during a black out no less, little goodbye, little well wish, & sometime later one of them lost me a new job, the place was bigger, I wanted to return, to make it right, enjoy it better, a connection with Portland months, make it right, enjoy it better, does the past cascade down some by some, til the regrets a great wood where old ghosts wait? I wonder if my father lives in his woods, younger flesh, fuller days, I try not to, breathe the current air, love it now, love it hereon—

What remains the intensity little the facts little the paths of hopes unfollowed—

What remains the stain travels battered by years—

What remains a human mystery no logic no evolutionary explain

What remains perhaps clue but in dream-code & conflicting & incomplete—
 What remains are shatters of many another lives crushed—
 What remains now little predicts the year's passage, needs a key may not exist—

The night delivers no answers but stresses choices make the path. How useless, how helpful. What next. Fuck only knows, isn't saying. Voices on the bus blather. Finish this page, stop, hoping for better.

Benny Big Dreams laughs & grabs my hand & pulls me back into this dream, we stand together.

"Speak with me" he says we lean within each other: "Embrace it all, let it go, see what remains, come on brother sister let dream & memory conjure together why this place, was it the years there, the brown staircase to office above, the back room desk your own for so long, the pass of time, faces not seen in years they were strangers then now more bluntly & who were they who are you can you say?"

It's bigger now, white, long, some faces remain, what are they? How can one fix upon the nature of dreams built strange from memories til not quite either, & drug dirty onto page now what are they, conjure of dream of memory, now what are they.

We speak again: "If anything can be netted useful from the murk it is like this, a shard of layered glint, hardly much yet if story there be left on these pages, this its direction—this its clue—*this its key*—"

xlii.

Not sure of too many details, old Luna T's Cafe friend Rick Jensen, now managing editor of *Thunder Road*, includes the following in a column:

"Noisy Children, the near-legendary reclusive band that's been around for over twenty years, are completing a new record & planning a subsequent tour. I never thought I'd write those words again, hardly believe them now, but for the moment they are true."

xliii.

It became quickly the most coherent hour at Luna T's bar: from the moment **TripTown** began its TV history few doubted that this show & Luna T's Cafe were unusually connected. Everyone watched. *Everyone*.

Not that it was set in a cafe or about a rock band or a freak artist & his wife or had a nutty old preacher in it. Still—

It came on Sunday nights though some claimed it was on other nights too. One drinker, Ali Doyle, claimed he heard it on the radio one night at 4 a.m. when he couldn't sleep.

"But it was different."

"How?"

"The story. They told it straight. It was good but I'm saying it was straight."

Nobody ever called **TripTown** 'straight' before—but Ali is a good guy, widower, never stayed late. Sometimes his son Menace would come & give him a ride home. We like Menace too.

"I like the homeless guy in the big boots," Ali continues, talky for him. "I'm glad they got him a job. I knew a kid like that, he liked the streets, the excitement, all that. Then

one day he stopped coming to my shop.” Wet eyes, glass gripped tighter. “I don’t know why they killed him. It was ugly. Cuz they could, I guess.”

xliv.

He still lives near the bridge. He’s not ready to let it go even though the others found out & won’t let up telling him to get a room.

“We like you. Anything can happen down here. Worst are the cops, you know that. You got a job & you’re young. Go have some good times while you can.”

He will. Sometimes another’s fears become your warning.

Tonight he holds the azure shrooms in his hands. The sun is nearly gone, pulling away the last of the mild day. He won’t be guarding at the library but somewhere else. Simple work, he was told, once an hour walk around the building & parking lot & mark off items on a checklist. Call an automated phone number to check in. Simple work. He can read the rest of the hour or bring in a little TV or radio. Eleven at night to seven in the morning.

The shrooms are tight little brown nuggets, smell like the earth, like the earth’s secrets. He decides to eat a half dozen. He even bought a pint of bottled water today.

The library guards arranged everything, even his uniform. The boots he got at a charity food kitchen, a back room. Heavy, black, laces up past his ankles. Lovely. Power boots, make him feel like a traveler to the moon.

They taste acrid & chew poorly but eats them one by one slowly, enjoying. Earth’s secrets.

He’d like to know where his sister is, if she’s OK. He named her Cordelia in a ceremony they had in their park. Her hair was blonde pattered in pink. They decided that as orphans they could declare they were long-lost siblings reunited. She named him Dylan. When she left, he ran away. Remembered their promise though.

A lot of his companions are now at the stream. It’s running again after a long winter’s frozen dreaming.

He brings his pack down & his books in their double-library bag. Night’s cool moves in soft, licking, no bite. He knows that for awhile it will be strange til what clouds & blocks gives way.

The men are jolly tonight, someone is passing around a bottle, there is singing. He listens vaguely, loving them more than any words or embrace. They watch out for him but leave him his distance.

“He’s a thinker, that one.”

“What’s he think about?”

“Pussy, booze, a good meal, a nice bed. Like all of us.”

“Nah. He’s special. We’re blessed by him.”

“Yah, all this, & a queer little kid off thinking by himself.”

“Look, I’m not fooling. You meet people sometimes, they’re not normal. They have a halo around them. Not like Jesus but, special. It’s like they see the world different, & it sees them different. I’ve known them. My grandmother, rest her soul. She saw things.” Shrugs. Pull of bottle.

“Like a saint or an angel you’re saying?”

“Sorta. Not really. He’s a street kid, you can see that. But there’s something more to him. I’ll miss him.”

Earth’s secrets. Cordelia’s angel-blue purse. That’s the color she named it.

“Angels are blue?”

"Their souls are."

"Angels have souls?"

"Of course. That's how they become people. Well, babies. And that's what happens after too."

"We're angels?"

"Of course. Not just us. Angels aren't shaped like people. They take on forms in the world. Rocks. Dogs. Oceans."

"The whole world is angels, Cordelia?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I dreamed it. And I knew it was right more than anything ever in my life."

Earth's secrets everywhere, lick the air & taste them as they rise up. Cordelia's angel-blue purse. The world filled with blue-souled angels in every shape & substance.

A little shudder, like a small ocean wave arriving within. Delicious. Happy. Mysterious.

A fire over there & watch how its sparks float to the sky, how it never keeps its shape, what is it, fire? What does it do & why, could he find a way to talk to it, ask what does wood taste like, what about charcoal? What about when you cook food, rub & lick it, penetrate its surface, do you stay in some way? What does tobacco taste like to you, what about reefer? Do you see me watching you from over here? I mean no harm, just curious.

The trees too, look at them . . . looking at me. Ahh . . . hm . . . yes I guess so . . . I don't know . . . can you tell me?

"Is he acting funny?"

"His normal is funny."

"No, look. Is he drunk?"

"He don't drink. He using again?"

"I don't think he uses."

"Should we check on him?"

"He's a private person. Let's just keep an eye."

"He's a nice kid. I wish him luck. It's a shame."

"It's a shame for the rest of us too."

Is that how I look? I'm hairy all over! What's crawling on me? Why is my heart so loud, what is my blood doing? I don't understand anything, I can read the dirt better if I draw in it eyes closed & then read after.

The world is daring me to join it & leave it behind. How do I decide which to do? Have the stars always been hanging from strings, what is holding them?

Has it always been tonight? Has it always been like this?

"It's OK. Everything is fine. Shh, don't talk, not yet. Drink this water. Slowly. There. Everything is fine. Drink a little more. That's good."

"What's wrong?"

"They take you straight & hard, no doubt. Nice, yes? Good, very nice. You're calming & settling into it. You're nearly ready. It's going well. Everything's fine."

"What's my name?"

"Everything's fine. You'll remember," said the mushroom from high up, dropping words in icicles.

Looking down the world seems covered in mushrooms in many colors & shapes, running, swimming, barking, firing guns, buried in boxes, blowing everywhere in scents & melodies

& then nothing.

"He's just staring."

"He ain't dead. He's breathing."

"Is it a seizure? Epi-whatsy?"

"Nah. My kid sister had that."

"Do we get him to the emergency room?"

"Don't. I'm OK."

"What did he say?"

"I'm OK. I'm OK. Just let me . . . sit."

Hours. Days. He waits. He breathes. Notices the moon & watches it pass very slowly.

Finally says aloud "Where is my sister Cordelia? Please tell me."

Nothing. Just nothing.

"Tell her I'm OK? Tell her I love her. Tell her I remember. Tell her I'm sorry."

Maybe something. Sum your life & figure.

It's pretty nice after awhile. Things seem sweeter. I don't know. I'm listening but someone cares enough to write it down. I'm as much a conscious creature as he who would intend me. I could like or dislike him. It's possible.

Things shimmer awhile & dissolve & it's OK, release, loss, hope, beauty, words, what's left, goodbye.

"He's saying goodbye"

"Where's he going?"

"I dunno. You don't think he ate some magic mushrooms?"

"Like the Indians? Peyote & all that?"

"Yah, maybe he got a bag from that injun who was around here for awhile."

"I thought they were all drunks now."

"Yah, mostly, it's sad. But not all. It's like everything, most forget, a few remember."

Under the freeway there were many pillars & where the men stood & camped the ground was hilly, eventually rising up to a quiet road. Dylan liked the many pillars, & up the near the road he sometimes stopped awhile among the vines & weeds there. How does home happen? By time & quirk, I suppose.

If he was supposed to leave this place, he had to know for sure, not because he had a job he hadn't asked for, but because his path was moving on, as his life with Cordelia had come & gone.

So he went to see the viney mass near the quiet road; it seemed the sure thing to do.

He sat near them in the full moonlight & trusted the mushroom spirits would aid him. He said there for a fair while.

lxiv.

TripTown ends & as usual there are no credits, just a pink & green-striped screen for half a minute.

“That’s it?”

“It’s always like that.”

“Well, I wish it didn’t.”

Mr. Bob labors to get everyone a free round of drinks, part of Sunday night’s tradition watching the show. He’d noticed it would rile people & decided to cool them off with liquid treats. It works.

xlv.

The vines form into a man’s face though he is sure they don’t always do that.

“You’ve come this far. Are you ready for more?”

“I don’t know.”

“Are you curious?”

“Does it get scary again?”

A laugh ringing deeper than ever these words in his head. Shaking him within.

“It *always* gets scary again while you live & breathe on that plane of yours. The secret is to know & experience *more!*”

This last word blows wild through him, body & mind. The leaf-formed face disappears & he feels a world coalescing around him. He’s forgotten where he began & releases entirely to what next.

Something large & square in the distance before him. Glowing with images. Peoples heads . . . seated as he finds he is.

“Dylan, I’m so glad we’re here,” said a bright pretty voice next to him.

Cord . . . elia?

Looks like her. Light blue eyes. Pink striped blonde head. Seashell necklace. Warmth. Sweetness. Curiosity. Restlessness. Fear. Stubbornness.

She holds his hand twined with hers. Her eyes snap back to the movie screen. He tries to remember that day they skipped out to the movies. Is he time-travelling? Is this Heaven?

Their movie eludes him & he wonders how it relates to the mushrooms & the vine-faced man. Colors not people then not colors but shapes. What does Cordelia see? He wants to tell her so many things, more than he knew til now.

I don’t like living under a highway. I don’t talk to people anymore. They try to help me like I’m one of them, like you can help a stranger without even knowing his name.

They don’t ask, they don’t listen. I don’t tell, I don’t want to. I protect myself & my memories.

“I wish this was real,” he says aloud in a whispered croak.

“It can be,” she smiles. “Look!” She points to the screen & it’s different now.

dreamlinger. Teeth & claws snaggle song & drag it near, long black fur, alien black eyes—wait til it sleeps, hold still, it sleeps, monster fade—now lift & barely gone—wonder what in ten ten thousand years unto this moment?

Wake. What warning, what clue, can any lift from this clumsy film of reality? Dream, death, orgasm, song, pain, magick? It follows your days, along, within, pawing—still sleeping, let it near, no lean, still sleeping, no fear, still sleeping, always still sleeping, face of torches, let it near—

Release it all & what? That preacher's book & his egghead talk about God & energies, his urge, his promise—

Is it regret, is it love, is it hope? What canvas does this world meekly dot?

A little more, & a little more now, the players lean into their instruments & play up a skyful of stars & the woods & plains below, the seas far & wild, the bodies & flowers, the sweets for hope, bullets for control—

& a little more now, the drummers accumulate man in skins or nude, & the dancers with their ropes of fire, the night stretches out ten ten thousand far, years, miles, branches of blood & light, memory & want—

& a little more, the temples crash wide & the dust & mites are free, prayers scurry into the soil & grow, new touches new & begin continuously

someone shouts “Eat the tab! Eat the tab! Eat the tab!”

Where a pilgrim retreats, the wood is soft & warm about him, the cushions dark & comforting, the vessel full & clear

& a little more

& a little more

the scarf so riddled with symbols it jingles

the gloves thin for its hands must work deftly

the blouse & trousers readied loose for the run

the shoes align with feet like lovers to their best task

World's kindness oft-muddled in blood scarves of cruel, nothing new, call it a religion's narrowing partisan noose, a king's wide cult of death, skin against skin, tongue against tongue, call it years random harder into tradition & polity & cosmology

Name the else, the half secret passed between shadows, the lift of something pretty from the human swinefest, name it, & no longer there, coax it, another comes, live it & know bones-midnight truth & dusty daylight doubt—

He looks at Cordelia til whatever she was disappears leaving him coated, stained, lighter—

“Is it over for the night?”

“I think there's more.”

“It's been on for hours! It's past 1! I gotta work in the morning!”

“Go then. I'm staying. Call in sick.”

“For a TV show?”

“For *this* TV show.”

Universe within & without, my thanks for these higher days along my path. I am trying to trust in something I won't name, reductive to say flow or energy or God, neither nameless nor nameful

propulsion, music, grace
dull glints in the street's morning trash
a brief leaning presence in the clouds
metaphor's endless wildlands

praise, grateful, the world nothing & how important for a passing
closed shades, soft voices within
steel power, concrete manacles
desert's windy roll forever
dream resembling Art I am

lxvii.

Whoever it was a year a decade ago here is this strange new time, trees still bloom, lights blink, I can't tell now from else,

Dylan feels a little steadier now, less like crazy oceans within, not released but . . . loosened

The bar at Luna T's Cafe goes at last dark for the night—

Rebecca looks at me softly: "Let up a bit. Do the work. It isn't supposed to hurt."

xlvi.

Now walk, Dylan, walk toward the city, the long night is pushing you to engage it, to find what you can in this city, walk & hum songs which come back to you from the radio Cordelia would play. It was a pink transistor radio with a white cat's face & feline body & it could be plugged in or run by two little batteries.

Cordelia listened to it before going to bed, she said the music that played would color her dreams.

What you're hearing now, of course, is her humming voice, her sway to some songs & finger dance to others, how she'd doodle as she listened to the news, the radio was her favorite thing. Well, you were her favorite person but the radio was quite special too.

Now you're in the city. Its streets slathered in darkness, little open & why are you here?

Over that bridge, the endless busy freeway below, wondering what it would feel like to jump into it, shuddering at the attraction.

OK, now, turn onto that side street, walk & walk, how it feels like flying, how shroom reality is still uplifting you, good, there you are, through that door, the cavernous coffeehouse, here is a place for you, a gift for when you've left behind the bridge. Here is where invisible souls come too, the kind that you can see.

An old man in a ragged floppy hat is sitting in a rusty armchair & looking about for a companion, who? He doesn't know. You sit in the armchair next to his in the small room among many, a couch its other piece of furniture, its light by beat-up lamps.

Sit. Close your eyes. Relax. Let the world arrive before you. Cusp of new, that's where you are, that's what this is.

Dylan's eyes open & sees on the grey linty rug below what looks like a greeting card.

"EASTER GREETING TO MY

VERY BEST BUNNY!"

says its cartoony cover with two bunnies arm in arm smiling.

Dylan looks it over, reading the sentiment too deeply for its intent. He doesn't think to open the card but lays it down on the small table between him & the old man.

The man looks at the card & then at Dylan.

"You're a Christian?" he asks.

"I don't think so."

"That card is hardly part of the story."

"Story?"

"Their Empire rules all, some by invisible strings in things, some more obviously"

"Empire?"

His eyebrows are like old slow bugs fat upon their branches. His eyes are older still, & they do not see Dylan as another sketchy kid hanging out punk-broke. His eyes see him deeply like Cordelia did.

"Everywhere you go, anything you touch, most of what you think, the Empire has programmed. We abide in their seat of power."

Cordelia thought trees had great power. She said the younger ones talked to her but the older ones didn't have much to do with language.

The old man is drawing a map with a blue ball point pen & a scrape of notebook paper.

"Europe . . . New World . . . colonies . . . missionaries . . . Founding Fathers. Illumnatus . . . secret societies . . . power within power . . . slaves to corporate multinationals . . ." on & on he talked, his voice by turns angry, fearful, cajoling, Dylan lost him quickly & felt a droning music lift the air suddenly with drums & organs, now shivering in elevating shroom space, how the walls angled oddly, why am I here, where do I go next? Is this place safe?

"Yes, it's safe," says the old man suddenly. "Don't worry. Even after hours nobody is pushed out blindly. The Resistance takes care of everyone one who seeks it."

Cordelia talked once in awhile like this. Paranoid, intimate. She'd read strange books & get so spooked she'd avoid libraries for weeks. "I have to believe the world is good," she said bluntly one night. "I have to believe it."

The old man has ceased his ramble. He rests eyes closed now, at his ease though still tensely alert.

Dylan looks around wondering what next.

xlvi.

How to put a Noisy Children concert on a stage other than Luna T's to an audience other than Luna T's. Leave it bare, or rise it high baroque?

Could some be induced deeper into the music, encouraged to follow within it? A concert within a concert? Yes, possible. What means? Tryptamines? Perhaps.

The concert within concert idea was Rebecca's. She & Rich sat at Cement Park discussing his doubts about live shows other than at T's.

"Maybe it doesn't have to be so strange & other."

"How?"

"Well, um, as the show goes on, the band recedes, leaving behind a visual image, like a live video. Whoever sees that going on is allowed where the band goes. They leave a visual image too even as they follow."

"Where though?"

"Well, here, for most. But for some, a few, deeper still."

"To?"

"The Ampitheatre. That's as deep as we've gone so far."

"Is there deeper?"

Rebecca's dark blue eyes shine live throughout her father. "There's always deeper."

"Can we get there with these shows? Is this a way?"

"I don't know, Dad. Maybe."

Americus now embraced the tour fully, seeing many possibilities more than initially. He was getting happy & hopeful.

xlix.

Hide of the earth rank with life, high noise, breaking hours in every direction, strangers all, the crawling, the pur, ancient lamps, spells in dark cities, cafe languid, sitting in every year with the pup & the crone

prayer for a moment so familiar tis a new magick—

for hands shaping something begun & finished with mystery—

for many years more with claws in my blood riling & raw—

Two cups of tea & a thick newspaper

Long stories of old diseases

Lights red & violet & how acoustic clear

was that night

Someone grows til the straps break

inside his mind, thoughts & words arrive

through him clean water

Strangers all, what leans one toward another despite, kisses by iron lamps, a dog moans in the darkness, how will it be tomorrow? What does nobody know?

When I knew him years back he shined, & still thoughts of those days return, his was a great body & mind, a singer, a lover, we ran each other hard & it was a happy race & tonight he's far maybe dead maybe a stranger & when I write strangers all I think of him, & wish wordless to him—

When I knew her years back, she was highest's bloom & still I remember with intimacy's sugared hurts, how life rang with her soul's bells how hours mattered sometimes desperately, how matter & music curved through her & tonight I don't know where or who she is, & when I write strangers all I think of her & conclude nothing at all—

Strangers all, not just those deep awled within, what were those years & did they in any way dream these? This bus jostles rusty toward my stop & then on, I leave it, where it goes is nowhere between us—

To allow one intimacy's veracity is to let possible infinite numbers. To acknowledge any invisible force as real in the material world is to let possible unknown many. To ask "why?" until the chief shamans—king, preacher, scientist, hero—shrug & turn away is to arrive in the unretrieved place of answers—told to love the questions, love the path, love the struggle, let go & trudge on, ask why? & why? & why? told the world is one, ask one what? Told the new age is come or the next coming is nigh, ask where? Given books to treat your enigmas like ills to be cured, **push back & hard**

Raise a howl & believe a thousand things at once then a thousand new ones if necessary—

I want to make Art, that's all, I don't know it to be truth's path though I live thusly, don't believe it to be truth's only way, know only where we've been together—it's been my dearest when the rest swept in & away—

I believe but do not know. I love but see bluntly how this shifts with the pass of years—my pages fill not for others but as my testament—

the night my partner in playing a music I never wish to know fully—

I hope for continuance by working ever free hour I bear—

1.

The old man wakes, takes off his hat & roughly pats down his wild of white uncombed hair.

"Mary Magdelene had a child named Sarah by her husband Jesus," he said sans preamble. "After the Crucifixion, she & Sarah fled to France where they lived out their lives. Some say Sarah was heir to Jesus' teachings, not the disciples."

Dylan blinks.

"But there's a deeper story than that. That's what you call the popular alternative to the official myth. There's more to it that is little known. Long ago, I was a scholar of ancient books. This led me for a time to regard myself as bearer of some kinds of esoteric human wisdom. I began to preach. People listened to me. Some cared for my ideas, others denounced them.

"Eventually I stopped preaching. I had ceased regarding myself as a knower & felt I was a profound fraud."

Dylan is bound to the old man's words as they come out in soft pinks & bright blues, as they scatter around the room like sparkles & settle on faces & chairs like dandelion seed.

"Now my path of humility is well-walked. I am ready to engage some of my old ideas. My dreams have stopped their tortures & bid me near again. I look at you tonight & know something must be seen greatly in this moment. Something new must pick up & carry on newly from where we sit right here together."

li.

Rich folk stroll great lawns thinking how to fill their sacks deeper, poor folk eat greasy bread dinners dreaming of sacks someday—

What else?

Children talk to sunshine & descending seeds til told no, look at him, look at her, human, human, human—

Preachers tell old stories of myth-men with great care & open palms—urge humility & subtle kindness while passing round baskets to pay the rent & the cable television bill—

Kings pound maps & call their passions new—call their years the greatest beheld—reckon how the centuries rise to our feet & how the path ascends from here, within our sight, good dog to our will—

I try to believe other is going on—the daily constant spell of gravity, the small gesture between strangers which binds them in passing—

I, we, I we I we I we & sometimes which one? both? either?

I want to believe my cries are not solitary & may be heard in ways I do not know—

I struggle with many hours pushing stories up small hills & down small vallies & up & down & up & down—

Told of the new age I believe no such thing. Told of end-times & nearing conflagrations I wait elsewhere for the bus—told God or no-God for sure, this book says so, that man says so, symbols in the cowshit say so I would rather be alone & free than sure & chained—

The night is shiny with questions in the electric glare—the night is wet with secret half-lives—the night comprises songs & sweets & not a pretty face or a purring beast but softer upon the eye & skin nonetheless—so much—

Nearer night & nearer dreams & nearer some moment when—when—

A breath. Another. A life of them lungs expand toward tallest man-moments & let up shrivel by the later fading years, even if soul rallies & rallies again.

A heart. Heart's great long task shaded by fool metaphor, it does more than light & dim with the fortunes of romance, it is fistly sun in our chests, unseen, little known yet touch chest & hear its loyal tapping.

Mind tangled within head trying to vine out to world's material lure & snake deeper to dream's surreal charms, unexplained source & organic vulnerable to its last neuron. What else?

Music the sourceless beast, opposite of moon's pull, swamps a soul though fingers & similes feel it & none explain. Move. Melody & funk have the controls tonight. Move!

Did you hear me wail at the bastards the other day? Did you receive my vow not to fall? Did you know how I am insisting how it matters, every hour & word & touch of it?

For anything to matter it must be able to flex & flow, find a beat, then another, I'm years trying to learn this—whatever this art is, has been, I don't know next & damnit all I don't want to—

Riding late night carriage in Seattle remembering its blocks—long back alleys & Amante & I stumbling drunken dawn toward the ferries years back—what could I tell him now if I could?

“Did you love him?” asks Dylan as he & the old man are leaving the coffeehouse.

I nod. “Why would it matter if it wasn't love or hate?”

lii.

“Will they be like Acid Tests?”

“Maybe. Not everyone will turn on though. Some won't know. People go as far as they will.”

“What will it be on the deepest level?”

“I don't know. Something tried before.”

“Did it work?”

“It must have sometimes. Victories convey through history differently than defeats.”

“Will there be cross-time talk like with David Time?”

“I don't think that ever stopped. Maybe we didn't want to see it for awhile but some doors don't close.”

I keep wondering what transmits best. Words? Prayerful howls? What summons, what conjures? I am not trapped yet here I still am where I wish not to be. The boulders impeding begin to give way. Whose are they? What causes the world's response this or that way? What ongoes?

Dylan & the old man out in the city, the hour later, Dylan's trip unfinished.

“I knew many of them back then. Leary. Alpert. Huxley. There was no consensus, just excitement & fear. Was it real? we'd ask each other. Was this the way elsewhere, not moon shots, not Apocalypse? There were many more quiet moments than popularly remembered. It wasn't some race to the climax. It was *all* climax & none.”

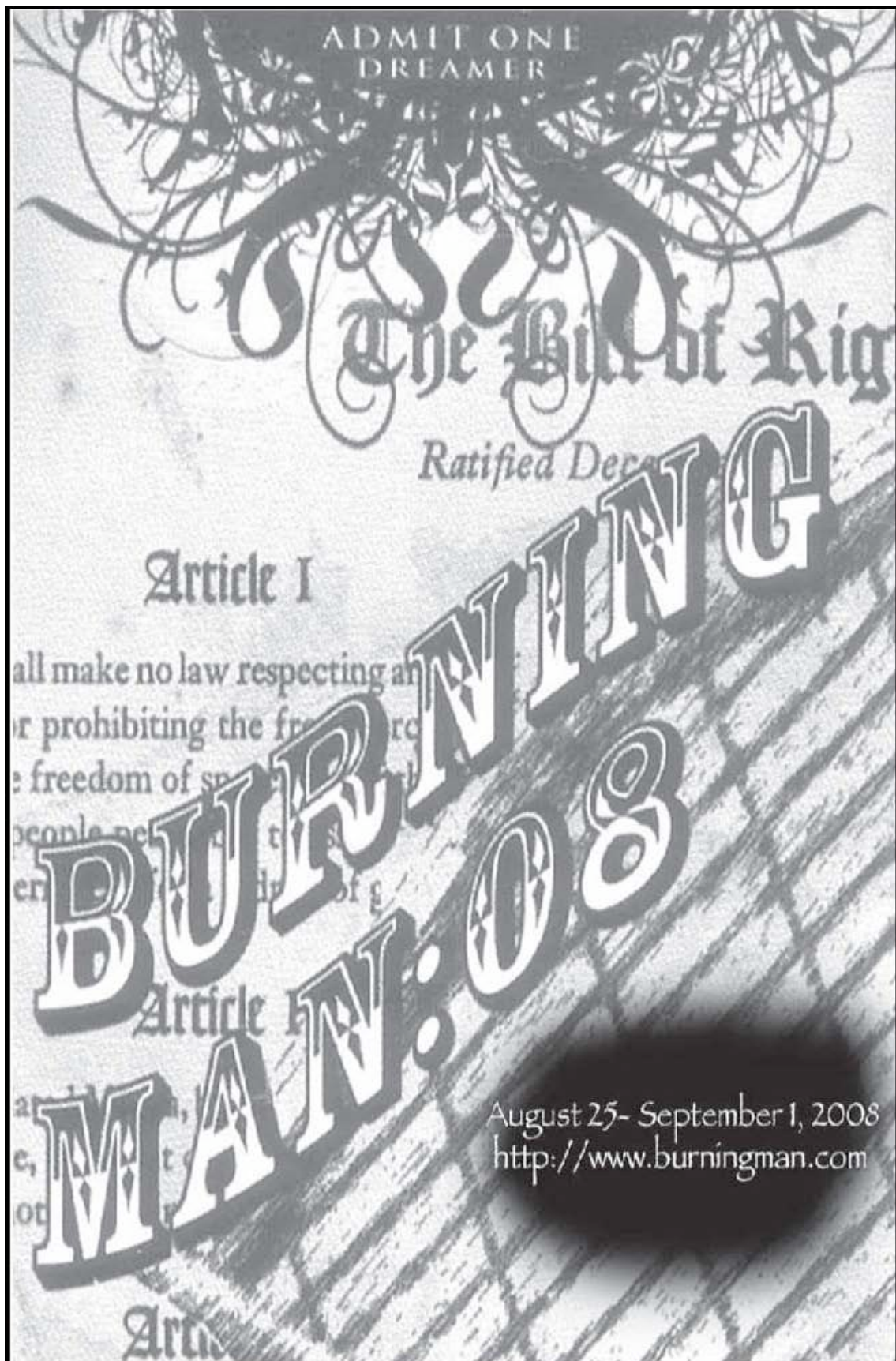
He pauses. “We thought we had something.”

Dylan's feet seem someone else's, he watches them too fascinated to listen. Are they someone else's? Would this old man tell him if he asked? Would he know?

“You're doing fine, new through the doorway I imagine. Very welcome too. There's so much work to do & it can't be all done by us decrepits with our begging sentiment. Not at all.”



To be continued in Cenacle | 65 | June 2008





Michael Van Kleeck

Shooting Up At Civic Stadium

Eight bucks a hit at the stadium gate and
the ticket vendor's promise is the same as a dealer's,
"come on boy, pay up, sit down, and let
time stop for a few hours," China White
fucks you up just like the hieroglyphic scratches
of a three-beer, nine inning scorecard,
fly balls and highballs get you off
this overcharged carousel where the horse
behind is always waiting to smash your
head open under frozen charging hooves,
Cracker Jacks and smack, it's all one more
try to wedge a bar in the ceaseless
gears of time's soul-grinding machine,
home runs and junk surges just Houdini
illusion promises that threaten an October
surprise long enough to bring you back,
one more hit and another eight bucks
under the dealer's door, rushing to find
your seat so you can hurry up
and stop time,
don't pass the needle unless you can
share a few peanuts with your junk friends
and bullshit about that one guy,
you know, the one who took all
that shit and hit the ball clear
over the ivy wall and to the MAX tracks,
it's all just addiction, baby.

The Resurrection of Celilo Falls

Sing through me, muse, about those late days
in the ruined Eden of Portland,
sing to me of the last dark hours
when the final sentinels of peace and imagination
fell apart on the banks of the Willamette,
when guilt and dread and fears of
final rejection kept the warriors away
from the last great battles of imagination.
Sing of the trees, their thousand years
message of stability, their eternities holding
our hills together, their branches protecting
the birds that carried our messages to
and from the rest of the world,
sing of the trees as they burned, as
their families lay dead and drowning
in polluted millponds on our poisoned river.
Sing of the Mighty Columbia, gateway
to the ocean, giver of food and life,
the violent river that ruled the Northwest,
sing to me as she drowned, as
her falls and waves fell finally
silent behind their dam,
sing to me of the way she was
raped for her energy,
and sing to me of the day
she broke through, the day Celilo
came back from her watery grave.

Joe Strummer Calling...

Straight to hell, boys, let's jump on that bus
it's leaving soon and there's just a few seats left,
I'm gonna sit up front and make sure the
driver doesn't listen to some ignorant preacher
who screams out Bible verses but doesn't
stop long enough to hear Jesus,
asking myself if I'm the new messiah
because I outlived God's self-declared son.
I've checked off every sin, but my
commandment breaks aren't worth repeating.
I bought my ticket the day they went on sale
and even as the flames start licking the
windows and the rest of the passengers scream
for air while the sulfur and brimstone
guarantee that this bus is going to
get to the promised land long before
the scheduled arrival,
I'm just sitting silently and not wasting
my last breaths on a God that wasn't
there in the first place.
I've always made the most of midnight
heart burns and dead lovers nailed to
the sides of collapsing memory walls,
whatever schedule they followed will
one day drop them into the same
skin-melting pit with me, and I'm
still gentleman enough to give them
my last glass of water.

The Dawn Of Yet Another Apocalypse

Winter's last goodbye pelts Southeast Portland with
 hail and sleet and the last throes of
 a dark season's dying desires,
 no longer can I choose to travel to the desert,
 this time it's going to come for me,
 the sun bringing a summons along
 with the first clear skies of spring.
 "You will throw yourself to the ground beside
 sagebrush highways that point to infinite horizons,
 you will quench your unbeatable thirst with
 mirages of teachers and mentors and lovers and friends
 washed down with cheap beer at clapboard bars,
 before you lay down for fitful sleeps
 in lumpy bed motel rooms begging for
 remodeling since the road-opening 1950s,"
 and I don't handle authority well but
 I know when an invitation is a thinly-veiled
 threat, the sun offers to bring me back
 to the gonzo life or to burn down
 the last scraps of the conventional
 existence I was never meant for, the
 life I found because it was easy,
 not because it was right,
 that life blows apart now like the
 fine talc sand of an empty playa
 scoured by freight train winds and
 savaged by the sun's relentless enthusiasm.
 "Take my offer for I only love to
 give," he says, offering a beam of
 light that burns at the softest touch,
 blinds at the quickest glance,
 but sparks a worn-out heart to
 wild desires and carefree desert journeys
 with just the faintest glance to the skin,
 to deny his offer is to be a
 giant fighting the gods, questioning the
 nature of existence and experience,
 rejecting the ebb and flow yin and yang
 of the charmed seasons and their diverse rewards,
 and I know better than to obstruct
 the inevitable stasis of the sun's shining subjects,
 I'll swallow his fiery gaze whole
 and give myself to whatever joyful
 road that his blazing heat burns
 deep inside my mapless questing soul.

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Joseph Campbell

Bios and Mythos

I - Sociological and Psychological Schools of Interpretation

The archetypes of mythology are constant enough for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Roman Catholics, adequately trained in their own symbology, to have regarded the myths and images, sacraments and temples of the New World as diabolical mockers of the truths of the one True Church. Fray Pedro Simón wrote of his mission in seventeenth-century Columbia:

The demon of that place began giving contrary doctrines, and among other things sought to discredit what the priest had been teaching concerning the Incarnation, declaring that it had not yet come to pass, but that presently the Sun would bring it to pass by taking flesh in the womb of a virgin of the village of Guacheta, causing her to conceive by the rays of the sun while she yet remained a virgin. These tidings were proclaimed throughout the region. And it so happened that the headman of the village named had two virgin daughters, each desirous that the miracle should be accomplished in her. These then began going out from their father's dwelling and garden enclosure every morning at the first peep of dawn. And mounting one of the numerous hills about the village, in the direction of the sunrise, they disposed themselves in such a way that the first rays of the sun were free to shine upon them. This going on for a number of days, it was granted the demon by Divine Permission (Whose judgments are incomprehensible) that things should come to pass as he had planned, and in such fashion that one of the daughters became pregnant, as she declared, by the sun. Nine months and she brought into the world a large and valuable *hacnata*, which in their language is an emerald. The woman took this, and wrapping it in cotton, placed it between her breasts, where she kept it a number of days, at the end of which time it was transformed into a living creature: all by order of the demon. The child was named Goranchacho, and he was reared in the household of the headman, his grandfather, until he was twenty-four years old—

whereupon he proceeded, in great state, to the capital of the nation and became known throughout the provinces as "Child of the Sun."¹

Fray Pedro's testimony is one of many. The Mexican symbols and myths of Quetzalcoatl so closely resemble those that the Padres in that area supposed that Saint Thomas's mission to India must have reached Tenochtitlàn, where, cut off from the pure source of Rome, the Waters of Redemption were muddled by fallen angels. Three centuries

¹ Fray Pedro Simon, *Noticias historiales de las conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales* (Cuenca, 1627), published in Lord Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico* (London: R. Havell, 1830-1848), Vol. VIII, pp. 263-64.

later, Adolf Bastian (1826-1905), voyaging to China and Japan, India, Africa, and South America, also recognized the uniformity of what he termed the “Elementary Ideas” (*Elementargedanke*) of mankind,² but he took a scientifically maturer view of the implicit problem. Instead of attributing the local variations to the distorting power of the devil, he considered the force of geography and history in the processing of the “Ethnic Ideas” (*Völkergedanke*), that is to say, in the shaping of the local transformations of the universal forms. “First,” he writes, “the idea as such must be studied . . . and as a second factor, the influence of climatic-geological conditions must be studied.”³ A third factor, to which he devotes many chapters of his innumerable volumes, is that of the impact and influence upon each other of the various “folk” traditions throughout the course of history. Bastian’s insight is basic, and has not yet been supplanted.

Tyler, Frazer, and the other comparative anthropologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries likewise recognized the obvious constancy in mankind’s Elementary Ideas. Franz Boas, for example, in the first edition of his early work, *The Mind of Primitive Man*,⁴ stated without qualification that “in the main the mental characteristics of man are the same all over the world”; and that “certain patterns of associated ideas may be recognized in all types of culture.”⁵ But these avowals were expunged from his second, “revised” (actually, recomposed) edition;⁶ for the vogue had by that time begun of stressing differences, even to the point of denying correspondences, between the dialects of the common human language.

We owe this new tendency in large measure to the muddle-headed Emile Durkheim. Read his confused discussion of Kant’s *a priori* forms of sensibility,⁷ and his quackery about the distinction between the Zuni and European experiences of space, and the shallowness of his whole parody of profundity will be apparent! The entire culturalist movement in our contemporary Anglo-American anthropological literature is touched with this Durkheimian myopia. Bronislaw Malinowski’s misreading of Sigmund Freud’s technical term “Oedipus complex” and his refutation, then, of his own misconception added new dignity to this movement,⁸ which in the mid-nineteen thirties culminated in a kind of professorial *curia*, dedicated to the proposition that mankind is not a species but an indefinitely variable dough, shaped by a self-creating demiurge, “Society.” The idea that man may have a psychological as well as physical character was anathematized *ex cathedra* as “mystical.”

The *curia*’s characteristic mistake, specifically, has been that of confusing function with morphology—as though a congress of zoologists, studying the wing of the bat, the flipper of the whale, the foreleg of the rat, and the arm of man, should not know these organs, though shaped to different functions, are structurally homologous, and were to suppose that the wing of the bat might be compared morphologically, with that of a butterfly, the flipper of a whale with the fin of a trout, the leg of a rat with that of a beetle, and the arm of a man with that of a lobster. Skipping the first task of a comparative

² Adolf Bastian, *Ethnische Elementargedanke in der Lehre vom Menschen* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1895), p. ix.

³ Adolf Bastian, *Das Beständige in den Menschenrassen und die Spielweite ihrer Veränderlichkeit* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1868), p. 88.

⁴ Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), p. 104.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁶ Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938).

⁷ Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, pp. 15-21. Contrast Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Einleitung and I. “Transzendente Elementarlehre.”

⁸ See Géza Róheim’s analysis of Malinowski’s fallacy, “The Oedipus Complex, Magic and Culture,” *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, (New York: International Universities Press, 1950), Vol. II, pp. 173-228.

science—that, namely, of distinguishing precisely the sphere of analogy from that of homology—these students of mankind proceeded to the second task—that of the monograph; and the result has been a complete dismemberment of what, at the opening of our century, promised to become a science.

In contrast, we have the sundry schools of the diffusionists, stressing cultural affinities that obviously unite vast portions of the human race. The philologists of the nineteenth century (Bopp, the Grimm brothers, Max Müller, etc.) studied the wide diffusion of the verbal roots and deities of the Indo-Europeans. Hugo Winckler and his school then indicated Mesopotamia as the area from which the world image and concomitant social structure that we find in all the high cultures of the planet must have diffused;⁹ James H. Breasted, G. Elliot Smith, and W. J. Perry spoke for Egypt;¹⁰ Harold Peake and Herbert John Fleure tentatively championed Syria;¹¹ while V. Gordon Childe supposed that it was somewhere in the area between the Nile and the Indus that the crucial step was taken from paleolithic food gathering to neolithic food production which underlies the structure of settled civilizations throughout the world.¹² Sylvanus G. Morley, on the other hand, held out for an independent origin of the agricultural civilization of the New World in Middle America,¹³ thus maintaining the traditional isolationism of the American Anthropological Society; whereas Leo Frobenius, long before, had recognized evidences of a diffusion across the Pacific.¹⁴ Adolf E. Jensen supported Frobenius's view in a study of the trans-Pacific diffusion of the mythological complex of an early gardening culture;¹⁵ G. F. Scott Elliot thought it probable that fugitives from Japan, c. 1000 B.C., had been responsible for the Middle American development;¹⁶ Rober von Heine-Geldern showed that late Chou Dynasty art motifs had been somehow diffused from China to Indonesia and Middle America;¹⁷ and now, most recently, in a richly documented joint publication by Betty J. Meggers, Clifford Evans, and Emilio Estrada, it has been shown that, possibly as early as 3000 B.C., an early type of Japanese cord-marked (Jomon) ceramic ware was carried from Kyushu to the coast of Ecuador.¹⁸ We know, furthermore, that the sweet potato, called *kumar* in Peru, is in

⁹ Winckler, *op. cit.*; also, same author, *Die babylonische Geisteskultur in ihrer Beziehung zur Kulturentwicklung der Menschheit* (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1907).

¹⁰ James H. Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926); G. Elliott Smith, *Human History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1929); W. J. Perry, *The Children of the Sun, A Study in the Early History of Civilization* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, n.d.).

¹¹ Harold Peake and Herbert John Fleure, *Peasants and Potters* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1927).

¹² V. Gordon Childe, *New Light on the Most Ancient East* (New York, 1934); *What Happened in History* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1934).

¹³ Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1946).

¹⁴ Leo Frobenius, *Geographische Kulturkunde* (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1904), pp. 443-664.

¹⁵ Adolf E. Jensen, *Das religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur* (Stuttgart, August Schröder Verlag, 2nd ed., 1949).

¹⁶ G. F. Scott Elliott, *Prehistoric Man and His Story* (London: Seeley, Service, 1920), pp. 255-271.

¹⁷ Twenty-ninth International Congress of Americanists, Museum of Natural History, New York City, September 7, 1949, joint paper by Dr. Robert von Heine-Geldern and Dr. Gordon F. Ekholm, "Significant Parallels in the Symbolic Arts of Southern Asia and Middle America." This paper was supported by the evidence of a temporary exhibit housed in the Museum, as well as by a paper read in the same session by Dr. Carl Schuster, "The Circum-Pacific and Oceanic Distribution of Some Body-Markings and Petroglyphic Designs."

¹⁸ Betty J. Meggers, Clifford Evans, and Emilio Estrada, *Early Formative Period of Coastal Ecuador: The Valdivia and Machalilla Phases* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1965).

Polynesia *kumara*.¹⁹ Moreover, as Carl O. Sauer has pointed out, a number of domesticates besides the sweet potato appear to have crossed the Pacific in pre-Columbian times: West to East, the bottle gourd, jack bean, coconut, and plaintain, a diploid cotton, the dog (and the custom of eating dogs), the chicken, and the art of brewing chichi beer; East to West, sweet potatoes, grain amaranths, and a tetraploid cotton; kapok and maize also were known on both shores of the great Pacific water.²⁰ C. C. Uhlenbeck has pointed to a fundamental affinity between the Western Eskimo languages, the Uralo-Altaic, and the so-called “A” complex of the Indo-European tongues,²¹ and there is, moreover, increasing evidence of some kind of Semitic-Indo-European continuity.²² In short, there can be no question but that vast areas of culture diffusion have been distinguished, and that these represent not only late diffusions but also very ancient ones. We cannot fail to be impressed, furthermore, by the clean-cut definition and self-consistency of many of these culture spheres, as well as by the tenacity with which their fundamental patterns of ritual and mythology have been retained in differing landscapes and even in spite of greatly differing economic conditions.²³

However, it is of first importance not to lose sight of the fact that mythological archetypes (Bastian’s Elementary Ideas) cut across the boundaries of these culture spheres and are not confined to any one or two, but are variously represented in all. For example, the idea of survival after death seems to be about coterminous with the human species; so also that of the sacred area (sanctuary), that of the efficacy of ritual, of ceremonial decorations, sacrifice, and of magic, that of supernal agencies, that of a transcendental yet ubiquitously immanent sacred power (*mana*, *wakonda*, *sakti*, etc.), that of a relationship between dream and the mythological realm, that of initiation, that of the initiate (shaman, priest, seer, etc.), and so on, for pages.²⁴ No amount of learned hair-splitting about the differences between Egyptian, Aztec, Hottentot, and Cherokee monster-killers can obscure the fact that the primary problem here is not historical or ethnological but psychological—even biological; that is to say, antecedent to the phenomenology of the culture styles; and no amount of scholarly jargon or apparatus can make it seem that the mere historian or anthropologist is dealing with the problem at all.

In this sensitive and tricky field (Goethe’s wondrous realm of “The Mothers”) the poet, the artist, and a certain type of romantic philosopher (Emerson, Nietzsche, Bergson, for example) are more successful; for, since in poetry and art, beyond the learning of rhetorical and manual techniques, the whole craft is that of seizing the idea and facilitating its epiphany, the creative mind, adequately trained, is less apt than the analytic to mistake a mere trope or concept for a living, life-awakening image. Poetry and art, whether “academic” or “modern,” are simply dead unless informed by Elementary Ideas: ideas, not as clear abstractions held in the mind, but as cognized, or rather re-cognized, vital factors of the subject’s own being. Though it is true that such living ideas become manifest only in the

¹⁹ Peter H. Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), *Vikings of the Sunrise* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1938), p. 314.

²⁰ Carl O. Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals* (New York: The American Geographical Society, 1952); see also his article, “Cultivated Plants of South and Central America,” in Julian H. Steward (ed.), *Handbook of South American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 143, 1950), Vol. 6, pp. 487-543.

²¹ C. C. Uhlenbeck, “The Indo-Germanic Mother Language and Mother Tribes Complex,” *American Anthropologist*, 1937, XXXIX, 385-93.

²² J. Vendryes, *Le langage* (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1921), pp. 356-57.

²³ See, for example, Leo Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* (Zurich: Phaidon Verlag), and Jensen, *op. cit.*

²⁴ For a review of the universal archetypes of the “adventure of the hero” and “cosmogonic cycle,” see Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, The Bollingen Series XVII (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949).

terms and style of some specific historical moment, their force nevertheless lies not in what meets the eye but in what dilates the heart, and this force, precisely, is their essential trait. Hence, since mythology is a compendium of such ideas, the historian or anthropologist heeding only his objective eye is gelded of the organ that would have made it possible for him to distinguish his materials. He may note and classify circumstances, but can no more speak authoritatively of mythology than a man without taste buds of taste.

On the other hand, however, though the poet or the artist, with immediate recognition, experiences the idea and grows to meet it; though it thus affects him as initiatory to his own nature, and in such a way that through it he comes into possession of himself and simultaneously into increased understanding of the Elementary Idea—he is finally an amateur in the fields of history and ethnology. There is certainly no comparison between the profundity of Wagner’s masterful realization of the import of Germanic mythology in his *Ring of the Nibelungs* and Max Müller’s sentimental theory about solar allegories; nevertheless, for detailed information concerning the materials involved, one would properly turn to the unilluminated philologist, not to the genius of Bayreuth.

Is it then impossible to have a science of myth?

Since Wagner’s and Max Müller’s day, C. G. Jung and Sigmund Freud have opened the way to the new prospect. with their recognition that myth and dream, ceremonial and neurosis, are homologous—their psychological readings of the phenomena of magic, sorcery, and theology, demonstrating the identity of the mythological realm and age with the unconscious, and the relationship, consequently, of myth to dream and of ceremonial to the symptomatology of a neurosis—a total transformation of our control of the problem of the Elementary Idea has taken place. Freud, mainly stressing the parallelism to neurosis, and Jung, recognizing the educative (in the primary sense of the term *e-ducere*) power of the life-binding images, have laid the foundations of a possible science of the universals of myth. Bastian’s order of study was correct: (1) the Elementary Idea; (2) the influence of local climatic-geological factors in the processing of the Ethnic Ideas; and (3) the impact upon each other of the varying local traditions in the course of history. Psychoanalysis now makes it possible to go beyond Bastian’s mere listing and description of the Elementary Ideas to a study of their biological roots. To criticize the method as unscientific is ridiculous, since objective scholarship, in this particular field, has shown itself helpless—and absolutely so; helpless by definition, since the materials are not optically measurable, but must, on the contrary, be experienced, if not as in the craftsmanship of the poet and the artist, then somehow in life.

There is no need to rehearse the demonstration by psychoanalysis of the parallelism of dream and myth, and the consequent theory of the possibility of mythology developing spontaneously, along traditional lines, wherever mankind may be nesting. “Anyone who really knows what a dream is will agree,” writes Géza Róheim, “that there cannot be several ‘culturally determined’ ways of dreaming just as there are no two ways of sleeping . . . The dream work is the same for everybody although there are differences in the degree and technique of secondary elaboration.”²⁵ The relationship of dream and vision to mythological symbolism, from Dante to the dreamers (*oko-jumu*) of the Andamanese,²⁶ is too well known, now, to require demonstration. There is a close relationship between the protective, ego-

²⁵ Géza Róheim, “Dream Analysis and Field Work in Anthropology,” *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences* (New York: International Universities Press, 1947), Vol. I, p. 90.

²⁶ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 177-79.

defending religious symbolism of any people and the dreams of its most talented dreamers. The medicine men, as Róheim so aptly phrases it, are “the lightning conductors of common anxiety. They fight the demons so that others can hunt the prey and in general fight reality.”²⁷ They fight the demons and, while doing so, achieve a measure of psychological wisdom that is denied their extraverted fellows. They are, in fact, the forerunners of those really great dreamers whose names are on the names of the pedagogues of the race: Ptahhotep, Akhnaton, Moses, Socrates, Plato, Lao-tzu, Confucius, Vyasa, Homer, the Buddha, Jesus, Quetzalcoatl, and Mohammed. The intentional fathoming of the interior darkness of the psyche in the long tradition of the disciplines of yoga has perhaps given India a larger share than other lands of the wisdom bestowed by the “Eternal Ones of the Dream”; nevertheless, some portion of that wisdom is shared by all the world. Hence Ananda K. Coomaraswamy could maintain that the metaphysical principles symbolized in India in the dreamlike imagery of myth are implicit in mythology everywhere. “All mythology,” he wrote in a paper comparing Platonic and Indian thought, “involves a corresponding philosophy; and if there is only one mythology, as there is only one ‘perennial philosophy,’ then that ‘the myth is not my own, I had it from my mother’ (Euripedes) points to a spiritual unity of the human race already predetermined long before the discovery of metals. It may be really true that, as [Alfred] Jeremias said, the various cultures of mankind are no more than the dialects of the one and the same spiritual language.”²⁸

“Myth,” he states again, “is the penultimate truth, of which all experience is the temporal reflection. Their mythical narrative is of timeless and placeless validity, true now and everywhere”;²⁹ precisely, one might add, as the dream is the penultimate truth about the dreamer, of which all his experience is the temporal reflection.

A serious science of mythology must take its subject matter with due seriousness, survey the field as a whole, and have at least some conception of the prodigious range of functions that mythology has served in the course of human history. It is dreamlike and, like a dream, a spontaneous product of the psyche; like dream, revelatory of the psyche and hence of the whole nature and destiny of man; like dream—like life—enigmatic to the uninitiated ego; and, like dream, protective of that ego. In the simplest human societies mythology is the text of the rites of passage; in the writings of the Hindu, Chinese, and Greek philosophers (as of all who have ever read them) mythology is the picture language of metaphysics. The first function is not violated by the second but extended; both harmoniously bind man, the growing animal, to his world, simultaneously in its visible and in its transcendent aspects. Mythology is the womb of mankind’s initiation to life and death.

II – The Biological Function of Myth

How mythology functions, why it is generated and required by the human species, why it is everywhere essentially the same, and why the rational destruction of it conduces to puerility, become known the moment one abandons the historical method of tracing secondary origins and adopts the biological view (characteristic of the medical art of psychoanalysis), which considers the primary organism itself, this universal carrier and fashioner of history,

²⁷ Géza Róheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture* (New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Monographs, 1943), p. 51.

²⁸ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Recollection, Indian and Platonic*, Supplement to the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Number 3, April-June 1944, p. 18.

²⁹ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York: Philosophical Library, n.d.), p. 6.

the human body. As Róheim states in his brilliant monograph *The Origin and Function of Culture*:

The outstanding difference between man and his animal brethren consists in the infantile morphological characters of human beings, in the prolongation of infancy. This prolonged infancy explains the traumatic character of sexual experiences which do not produce the like effect in our simian brethren or cousins, and the existence of the Oedipus Complex itself which is partly a conflict between archaic and recent love objects. Finally, the defence mechanisms themselves owe their existence to the fact that our Soma (Ego) is even more retarded than the Germa (Id) and hence the immature Ego evolves defence mechanisms as a protection against libidinal quantities which it is not prepared to deal with.³⁰

“Man,” as Adolf Portmann of Basel vividly phrases it, “is the incomplete creature whose style of life is the historical process determined by a tradition.”³¹ He is congenitally dependent on society and society, commensurably, is both oriented to and derived from the distinctive psychosomatic structure of man. This structure, furthermore, is rooted not in any local landscape, with its economic-political potentials, but in the germa of a widely distributed biological species. Whether on the ice of Baffin Land or in the jungles of Brazil, building temples in Siam or cafés in Paris, “civilization,” as Dr. Róheim shows, “originates in delayed infancy and its function is security. It is a huge network of more or less successful attempts to protect mankind against the danger of object-loss, the colossal efforts of a baby who is afraid of being left alone in the dark.”³² In such a context, the symbolical potentialities of the various environments are at least as important as the economic; symbolism, the protection of the psyche, no less necessary than the nourishment of the soma. Society, as a fostering organ, is thus a kind of exterior “second womb,” wherein the postnatal stages of man’s long gestation—much longer than that of any other placental—are supported and defended.

One thinks of the marsupial pouch, likewise auxiliary to a foetal development that overreaches the intrauterine possibilities of the species. The young of the kangaroo, for example, born after a gestation period of but three weeks, measure an inch in length and are entirely naked and blind; their hind limbs are undeveloped, but the forelimbs are robust with claws. William King Gregory, of the American Museum of Natural History, describes the climbing of these little creatures, by means of their sturdy forelimbs, up the mother’s belly, immediately upon birth, and into her pouch, where they reach for the teats, one of which each eventually seizes. The tip of the teat then expands within the mouth, so that the young cannot be released. “Thus the marsupials,” Gregory summarizes, “specialized in the early and brief internal development of the embryo, which depends for food chiefly upon its own yolk-sack and which completes its development after birth while attached to the teat. The higher or placental mammals gave the young a longer and better uterine development and a more flexible system of nursing, with greater maternal responsibility.”³³

³⁰ Géza Róheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture*, p. 17.

³¹ Adolf Portmann, “Das Ursprungsproblem,” *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1947* (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1948), p. 27.

³² Róheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture*, p. 100.

³³ William King Gregory, “Marsupialia,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th edition, XIV: 975-976.

The marsupials (kangaroo, bandicoot, wombat, opossum, etc.) represent an intermediate stage between monotremes (the duck-billed platypus, spiny anteater of Australia, etc.), whose progeny, like those of reptiles, are born from eggs, and placentals (mice, antelopes, leopards, gorillas, etc.), whose young appear only after a comparatively long gestation period within the mother (made possible by the placenta) and at birth are almost ready for life. Man, biologically, is a placental. the period of gestation, however, has become again inadequate—indeed, even less adequate than that of the marsupials; for instead of the mere few months spent by the young kangaroo in the auxiliary womb of its mother's pouch, the infant *Homo sapiens* requires years before it can forage for its food, and as many as twenty before it looks and behaves like an adult.

George Bernard Shaw played on this anomaly in his biological fantasy *Back to Methuselah*, where he viewed man, in Nietzsche's manner, as a bridge to the superman. Looking forward to the year 31,920 A.D., he showed us from the birth from a huge egg of a pretty girl, who, in the twentieth century, would have been thought to be about seventeen.³⁴ She had been growing within the egg for two years; the first nine months, like the nine of the present gestation period of the human embryo, recapitulated the biological evolution of man; the remaining fifteen then matured the organism, briefly but securely, to the condition of the young adult. Four years more, spent among youthful playmates in the sort of childhood we remain in today until seventy, would terminate when her mind changed and the young woman, tiring suddenly of play, became wise and fit for the wielding of such power as today, in the hands of children, is threatening to wreck the world.

Human adulthood is not achieved until the twenties; Shaw put it in the seventies: not a few look ahead to Purgatory. Meanwhile, society is what takes the place of the Shavian egg.

Róheim had indicated the problem of man-growing-up, no matter where—defense against libidinal quantities with which the immature ego is not prepared to deal;³⁵ and he has analyzed the curious “symbiotic mode of mastering reality,”³⁶ which is the very fashioner, the master builder, of all human societies. “It is the nature of our species,” he writes, “to master reality on a libidinal basis and we create a society, an environment in which this and only this is possible.”³⁷ The psyche as we know it, is formed by the introjection of primary objects (super-ego) and the first contact with environment (ego). Society itself is knitted together by projection of these primary introjected objects or concepts followed by a series of subsequent introjections and projections.³⁸ This tight-knitting of defensive fantasy and external reality is what builds the second womb, the marsupial pouch that we call society. Hence, though man's environment greatly varies in the corners of the planet, there is a marvelous monotony about his ritual forms. Local styles of the century, nation, race, or social class obviously differ; yet what James Joyce calls the “grave and constant in human sufferings,”³⁹ remains truly constant and grave. It arrests the mind, everywhere, in the rituals of birth, adolescence, marriage, death, installation, and initiation, uniting it with the mysteries of eternal recurrence and of man's psychosomatic maturation. The individual grows up, not only as a member of a certain social group, but as a human being.

³⁴ George Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah* (New York: Brentano's, 1921), pp. 235 ff.

³⁵ Róheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture*, p. 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

³⁹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: The Viking Press, 1964 ed.), p. 204.

III – The Image of a Second Birth

Rites, then, together with the mythologies that support them, constitute the second womb, the matrix of the postnatal gestation of the placental *Homo sapiens*. This fact, moreover, has been known to the pedagogues of the race, certainly since the period of the Upanishads, and probably since that of the Aurignacian caves. In the Mundaka Upanishad we read, for example: “There are two knowledges to be known—as indeed the knowers of the Brahman are wont to say: a higher and also a lower. Of these, the lower is the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda, the Atharva Veda, Pronunciation, Ritual, Grammar, Definition, Metrics, and Astrology. The higher is that whereby the Imperishable is apprehended.”⁴⁰ “Those abiding in the midst of ignorance, self-wise, thinking themselves learned, hard smitten, go around deluded, like blind men led by one who is himself blind. Thinking sacrifice and merit the chiefest thing, naught better do they know . . . But they who practice austerity and faith in the forest, the peaceful knowers who live on alms, depart passionless through the door of the sun, to where is that immortal Person, even the imperishable Spirit.”⁴¹

In India the objective is to be *born* from the womb of myth, not to remain in it, and the one who has attained to this “second birth” is truly the “twice born,” freed from the pedagogical devices of society, the lures and threats of myth, the local *mores*, the usual hopes of benefits and rewards. He is truly “free” (*mukti*), “released while living” (*jivan mukti*); he is that reposeful “superman” who is man perfected—though in our kindergarten of libidinous misapprehensions he moves like a being from another sphere.

The same idea of the “second birth” is certainly basic to Christianity also, where it is symbolized in baptism. “Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”⁴² One could ask for no more vivid rendition of the doctrine of the two wombs: the womb of the mammal and the womb of perfected man.

Within the Christian Church, however, there has been a historically successful tendency to anathematize the obvious implications of this idea, and the result has been a general obscuration of the fact that regeneration means going beyond, not remaining within, the confines of mythology. Whereas in the Orient—India, Tibet, China, Japan, Indo-China, and Indonesia—everyone is expected, at least in his final incarnation, to leave the womb of myth, to pass through the sun-door and stand before the gods, in the West—or at least through the greater part of the Judaeo-Christian-Mohammedan development—God remains the Father, and none can step beyond Him. This accounts, perhaps, for the great distinction between the manly piety of the Orient and the infantile of the recent Occident. In the lands of the truly “twice born” man is finally superior to the gods, whereas in the West even the saint is required to remain within the body of the Church, and the “second birth” is read rather as being born *into* the Church rather than born out of it. The historical result was a shattering of this particular marsupial pouch in the fifteenth century.

There is no need to multiply examples of the rebirth motif in the philosophies and religious rites of the civilized world. The Neoplatonic and Taoist philosophies, the Greek

⁴⁰ *Mundaka Upanisad* 1.1. 4-6. Translation by Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 366-67

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1.2. 8-11, in Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-69.

⁴² John 3:5-6

Mysteries, the myths and rites of Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, as well as those of the Celts and Germans, Aztecs and Mayas, abound in applications of the idea. Nor is it less prominent in the myths and rites of the primitive peoples of the world. "Death and rebirth," declares Róheim, "are the typical contents of all initiation rites."⁴³

Among the Keraki of New Guinea bull-roarers play a prominent role in the ceremonies of initiation. The boys are made to sit with their eyes covered by the older men and then the bull-roarers begin to sound. The boys think they are hearing the voice of the presiding crocodile-deity of the ritual; the sound comes nearer, as though the monster were approaching to swallow them, and when it is directly over their heads, the old men's hands are removed and the boys see the bull-roarers.⁴⁴ Thus they become aware, abruptly, of the source of the sound that throughout their childhood has been thought to be the voice of a living monster.

Such sudden awakenings are characteristic of the tradition of initiation everywhere. What for the child were disciplinary terrors become the symbolic implements of the adult who knows. Nevertheless, the result is not that the symbols are understood as frauds; on the contrary, the bull-roarers of the Keraki receive food offerings.⁴⁵ They are divinities: the guardians of the Way of life. "At the creation of the world," said a medicine man of the Pawnee of Kansas and Nebraska, "it was arranged that there should be lesser powers. Tirawaatius, the mighty power, could not come near to man, could not be seen or felt by him, therefore the lesser powers were permitted. They were to mediate between man and Tirawa."⁴⁶ The myths and paraphernalia of the rites of passage represent such powers, and so are informed with the force of the source, support, and end of existence.

The fact that some of the burials of the Mousterian cave men include implements and joints of meat suggests that the idea of regeneration beyond the veil of life must have been entertained some fifty thousand years B.C. Later Paleolithic burials with the corpse in the crouch-position of the foetus in the womb give point to the same theme by stressing the idea of a second birth. And, finally, the picture of a dancing, masked medicine man in the Aurignacian cave of the Trois Frères, Ariège, France, suggests that there must have been, fifteen thousand years ago, initiates aware of the force and meaning of the symbols. It would perhaps be going too far to suggest that in any primitive society pedagogues, or mystagogues, can have existed whose reading of the rebirth idea drove as far as that of the Hindus; nevertheless, it cannot be denied that in primitive mythologies and rites we find the image of the sun-door, the clashing rocks, death and resurrection, the Incarnation, the sacred marriage and father atonement, employed not haphazardly but in the same relationships as in the myths of the higher cultures.⁴⁷

The actual unity of folklore represents on the popular level [declared Ananda K. Coomaraswamy] precisely what the orthodoxy of an élite represents in a relatively

⁴³ Géza Róheim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream* (New York: International Universities Press, 1945), p. 116.

⁴⁴ Richard Thurnwald, "Primitive Initiations- und Wiedergeburtssiten," *Erano-Jahrbuch 1939* (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1940), pp. 364-66. This entire volume, by the way, should be consulted by anyone doubting the universality of the rebirth idea.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁴⁶ Alice C. Fletcher, *The Hako: A Pawnee Ceremony*, Twenty-second Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington, D.C., 1904), Part 2, p. 27.

⁴⁷ Cf. Jeff King, Maud Oakes, and Joseph Campbell, *Where the Two Came to Their Father: A Navaho War Ceremony*, The Bollingen Series I (New York: Pantheon Books, 1943).

learned environment. The relation between the popular and the learned metaphysics is, moreover, analogous to and partially identical with that of the lesser to the greater mysteries. To a very large extent both employ one and the same symbols, which are taken more literally in the one case and in the other understood parabolically: for example, the “giants” and “heroes” of popular legend are the titans and gods of the more learned mythology, the seven-league boots of the hero correspond to the strides of an Agni or a Buddha, and “Tom Thumb” is no other than the Son whom Eckhart describes as “small, but so puissant.” *So long as the material of folklore is transmitted, so long is the ground available on which the superstructure of full initiatory understanding can be built.*⁴⁸

Whether, in any given culture, the individual is enabled to be really born again or required to remain spiritually foetal until released from purgatory, myth is everywhere the womb of man’s specifically human birth: the long-trying, the tested matrix within which the unfinished being is brought to maturity; simultaneously processing the growing ego against libidinal quantities which it is not prepared with and furnishing it with the necessary foods and saps for its normal, harmonious unfoldment. Mythology fosters a balanced intuitive and instinctive, as well as rational, ontogenesis, and throughout the domain of the species the morphology of this peculiar spiritual organ of *Homo sapiens* is no less constant than that of the well-known, readily recognizable human physique itself.

IV – The Anxiety of the Misborn

Misbirth is possible from the mythological womb as well as from the physiological: there can be adhesions, malformations, arrestations, etc. We call them neuroses and psychoses. Hence we find today, after some five hundred years of the systemic dismemberment and rejection of the mythological organ of our species, all the sad young men, for whom life is a problem. Mythology leads the libido into ego-syntonic channels, where neurosis (to cite, once again, Géza Róheim) “separates the individual from his fellows and connects him with his own infantile images.”⁴⁹ Psychoanalysis and certain movements in contemporary arts and letters represent an effort to restore the biologically necessary spiritual organ. Blake, for example, Goethe and Emerson, saw the need for it. Their effort was to restore the poet to his traditional function of seer and mystagogue of the regenerative vision. James Joyce has supplied the whole blueprint. The morphology of the organ will remain the same as ever, but the materials of which it is composed and the functions served will have to be those of the new world: the materials of the machine age and the functions of the world society that is today in its throes of birth—as myth.

⁴⁸ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Primitive Mentality,” *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought* (London: Luzac, 1946), p. 220. The italics are Dr. Coomaraswamy’s.

⁴⁹ Róheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture*, p. 93.



Raymond Soulard, Jr.



Many Musics

second series

“Beware & be aware.”

i. Intaglio

What else, not shown by lights,
 what leans back in shadow,
 touches & moves from afar,
 leaves a print by chance,
 call it history, call the world
 an effect of what does not plain
 travel city streets.

ii. Mirror

Where are her legs? Hers is a butchered
 torso, riding wheels across the dusky
 bridge, humming as the swamps pass,
 she wears leaf-shaped earrings &
 carries thin books for companions,
 I just wonder where her legs are,
 & amaze that any flesh long
 survives the years at all.

iii. Conjure

Figure where the magick &
 the artillery cross, riddled fields
 of golden beam, lean-limbed creatures
 feeding close, while kings plan the blood
 needed to move maps, what lost
 when the Empire recks too many
 voices. Reck better what remains when
 long since the last bones fallen.

iv. Totemic

Music twists new sugars from
 ripe debris, pulsing iron streetlamps,
 sentiment for a voice in shapely
 remain. Shifting faces, some sweet hours
 of moonlight's easy wane. Yet some
 still wait a melody, a man's long death

in an old house, his memories the
 fine thing of love & delusion. A woman
 tends her stripling, ducks old wants
 in the child's bathwater, makes him
 splash & laugh. Others too, countless,
 by the species, by the fallen soldier, in turn.

v. Obsession

The tinker spoke of space serpents
 & burnt young bodies in years to
 come. He showed the cameras
 his formula, his plan of numbers
 for saving us all. Sweating, sad,
 fearing the microphone, he talked
 on hours. He was nearly sure, & hated it.

vi. Relief

[Bing Wright, "Rain Window VII,"
gelatin silver print, 1998]

There, a puddled route away,
 no dreams of blood on canvas,
 just away! No music struck
 from fragging bone chips. Away.

A housefly licks the key in the hand
 who won my fame. The rain
 shudders those framed hills &
 all passes the hour away. Now
 trickling, now gone. A buzz, a break,
 now trickling, now gone.

vii. Still Raw Wound

[Mark Tansey, "Study for Sea Change,"
oil on canvas, 2005]

It went with the day, was going,
was nearly gone, but that
day, sun by moon, smoke by fear,
wave by missile, stone by flu,
it went, the streets of skulls, children too.

viii. Furies

[Ansel Adams, "Moonrise, Hernandez,"
gelatin silver print, circa 1948]

Sun by moon, windows let my
nocturnal furies out, burning
paths through crosses & sagebrush,
marking God's time as cruel
Papa fading, marking mankind's
careless suck on the world about
to break, & from those white mountains
& from that red-eyed sky titan
will come relief. I rock & quake
& chew my thin salt soup.

ix. Ecology

[Harry Bertoia, "Dandelion,"
gilded stainless steel on
marble base, circa 1960]

World bides its wicked, its pain
makers & flesh eaters & greedy
beasts for time & dirt. World
bides the sudden scatter of good
blood, of wasted fruit, of hurry in
praise & slow in vanquish. World
bides, world loves, world seeds 'where,
world is home. Dreaming you are safe in all.

x. *Two Dreams*

[Émile René Ménard, "Brittany Seascape,
pastel & chalk on paper, 1890]

In the second, a 'scape from
my nights, my secret sleeps,
running, posing as carnival statues
in traveling mutant shows,
a very long dream, woke with
my head cracking the window
& artillery lined up on the motel
bed. She'd gone.

In the first, what contained
the other & gave its sickness,
what hollowed my plan of numbers
to save the world, I sat by
a motel window, a humbled Mexican
elder, the music leading me
on that dark moonbeam out,
through blood & brush, & old lusts.

xi. *Ra*

Not the bird, but the memory of its sunrise
flight found in glowing text, a thousand years hence—

xii. *Conflation*

"And only a red mane flickered in the abyss."

—*Czesław Miłosz*

The poor man waits his hour of fame,
 his flaring moment when every lost
 night in drink & broken sex, every foul
 master given a kiss & a salute,
 & the touch of sunset beauty
 & soft friendly fur & lamenting croon

quiet enough to undo your fists, makes
 you remember what you work hard not to,
 when all of it will come together & explain.
 Reward. Waits, as though his suffering
 a cause, debris ripe upon their new
 spark & bloom, new kissing melody,

not the wicked of waste patient for an
 arriving light. Waits, all his life's blood
 on this dreamed hour's canvas, & how its final,
 telling stroke nears! So close, tells his friends,
 each sodden in his own liquid cursing hour
 of hope. Night passes, common stars & frost

by the freeway, their disillusion arrives kindly
 in diminishing breaths.

xiii. Crossing Flesh Through

One stood foul & slow among the
 quick-joyed numbers. One could not
 nod & loose his old want, gnashed. Again.

One disbelieved in nothing & preached
 it to the wires & walls & grey beaches
 untroubled & empty.

One struck the music, again, struck
 the music, waited, it would come,
 first the echo, then the reply. The chorus.

The discord as another tired for a
 new quiver of notes, slab of colors
 culled by a new spade, a new hour's

distinct yowl to the cosmos, I exist!
 All of this exists! I hurt! I want!
 One nodded, let go, knowing there were others.

Would they remember? None assure
 which deep bites take the years & the distance.
 Would anything remember? Like the
 motel window remembers last night's storm.

xiv. Tough Flutters

What's true is coming trouble, what's
 true is constant ferment. Chased down,
 half-dead, pulled into the brush. No
 next. What's true is the passing beat
 of any truth, any great swinging spectre
 of rage & light. What's true in this hour,
 high & solid & good, is crumbling, emptying
 to another's brief throne. What's true happens
 always, gives way only to itself, spitting
 yeas & denials equally in bitter, golden abundance.

xv. Some Eat Others

Some keening croon for a god,
 a science, a sweet faith's sting true.
 Why ferment, why breath, why dream.
 The wisest book warns "Some eat
 others" & shuts hard. What crooning's
 best fruits, its fair healing to wounds?

Or wait letters from a lost, fond year,
 what comes the old wants, bitter
 bones, still tangled smolders. Why
 ferment, why breath, why dream. Keening
 for a great swinging spectre blowing
 out rage & light, for more explain than

each new squalling flesh on a stick,
 the best little bite back the years &
 the distance. Why ferment, why breath,
 why dream? Some eat others. No
 science, no faith. What heart's newgrown
 starlight from beggaring world for its king?

xvi. Empathy

What difference between carriage's angry
push & several muddied blouses?
What difference between old men easily
debating war & the bombs made for
market noons? If a beggar looks close
at you, is this sacred or shameful new space?

Talk of love, talk of empathy, rant on
the burning blankness through world's
old heart. Confess indifference, cry ignorance,
keen to being less than a stripling in
first night's squall. Eat the new pill &
care for a shining hour or two.

Some other night in giving arms &
the world a fine sweet to be enjoyed
slowly. Past dawn believe something
salves the closest wounds. Changed for
every change, every new broken high,
every bed, why unloved, alone.

Tonight someone suffers. Must a sage
exhume to say you suffer too?

xvii. Self Leaves Effects

What remains, what secret juice from
 mapless street corners, dusky in old light,
 how it mattered, how it persists,
 call it nothing but a dream's chasing specters,
 push it to a small room filled with other
 blood canvases, dread grey through tarred windows.

Memory of a memory, colored absence,
 humming silence, the tap of old squalls,
 readying. What high smiling night dreamed
 this hour, & what coming hour dreams now!
 There were skulls of shacks, charred
 autos, desert light spiking corpses.

The questions thread my path & their
 answers golden come in music, restless
 with flesh & wounds. What remains residue
 of another hour's try to breach, its arc
 through the universe, bright, fierce,
 letting go but slowly, & even now.

xviii. Weaving

Tonight someone suffers. No water,
 empty bowl, two pillows for one head.
 A sack of cold coins, a palsied try
 reading wise leaves. War where once
 a city, now the markets burn, neighbors
 blankly clutch for what remains.

Blood & breath skein all close, your life
 a weaving each to all. Someone suffers.
 Turn away & there another. Turn again
 to scrap free of what bonds, hearts
 crossing loins, shared mystery of want
 & water. Tonight someone suffers.

Walk, then run from that keening croon
 for a god, some far place of rest.
 Return, in your time, to this hour,
 a gift of colored glass, elixir's glowing
 test, a wide open eye in love, now. Nothing
 divides us but the walls hands have made.

Tonight someone suffers. No wall, empty bowl.
 Kind solitude become angry, a crooning
 corrode. Yours to bear another's music,
 & another's, bear many musics, til a
 break, a clear shine, til what else reveals.

xix. Burst

The night a tired mother, her prayer
 for more coins & sleep. She thinks in
 numbers & feels in concert with her
 stripling's coos & cries. This room
 is blaring about God, about belief,
 a code, a key, sad endless war.

A window of dim neon & fine
 stars, currents of dust, of salmon,
 a green flicker tapping through the
 cosmos, she listens, her child
 dreams, dark diamond eyes, they
 dream, cascading white petals, new way.

Dis-illusion as greater head leans to
 lesser, daylight's borders grey & go,
 hands rest near, stars a whisper
 off, silence rises before sun in
 these strangest hours. One shifts, &
 the other, new day's seed bursts.

xx. *Sentiment is Rust*

There was an hour, rising a brilliant
 shaft of hope, homeless as a wild goat,
 become, it seemed lastly, a pure heat
 stalking heat, careening petal without
 stem or soil. Dreaming by movement alone,
 glad hustling the days & miles, ever singing
 my bright cage, strumming its bars
 & calling this my music. Sweet velvet
 blindness, hopeless preaching my path.

A touch, another, nights crying wide
 to starlight on earth. A touch, another,
 then none. Hungry as a wild goat,
 an hour passed, many hours. Countless
 barking my songs, next tome, breaking
 vessel, worse ruin. Many hours, I stretched
 on, how choose what to let crumble,
 which to call soul & all other rust?
 What tonight is blithely letting go?

Bones of days restless for bury, let their
 dirge in shadows fall. Let their shaft
 strike my beast within, let the old blood
 burst, let these new hours consume.

xxi. *Caustic*

The rivet of every cause looses, no matter
 how high the wall, how massed the men,
 how cruel & right the lead temple's tome.
 Looses, air bites through, an hour, another,
 many breaths, wrong ideas take their hold
 a gentle lick at a time. Sin softens,
 becomes familiar, the poor, the outcast
 shift nearer, stay. Eventually a new
 high wall, next wrath of rivets, will
 roar beautifully, will last forever, awhile.

xxii. *Comfort's Fable*

[Claude Monet, "The Manneport Seen from Below,"
oil on canvas, 1883]

Tide chips, time chides. Rift from the cosmos,
from yon stellar intent, the leggy rock crushes
through sea, through onyx reaches to a
floor no man may know. Knowing not what
man does, but what he tries. Tide chips,
time chides. The endless water of years gathers
finally around limbs & heart, & everything goes.

xxiii. *Wish's Promise*

[René Magritte, "The Tempest,"
oil on canvas mounted on board, 1944]

What rises two remains one.
The brilliant hand may sing til it forgets.
The burnt leaf may rest forgetting among countless.
What rises one flesh ever remains.
The sea challenges the hand to make as well.
The mountain regards the leaf puny, careless
time's lesser pet.
What rises from a single cell, single thought,
first gesturing act, ever sources whole.
The hand will return, the leaf will
remember, the web is story & returns
all to dream. The sea will swallow
itself, the stars will croon their last
light. What rises two remains one.
What rises two listens, comes, joins all again.

xxiv. *Distance*

[Pierre-Auguste Renoir, "Dance at Bougival,"
oil on canvas, 1883]

Nothing salves the closest wounds, however
flesh heats pretty & hearts beat fine.
The distance from joy grows inward, pathless
track to a nameless consume. What comfort
in memory is not new light but steady
breath, then to now. Some sweetness is forgetting.

xxv. Reconcile

Was it Cambridge? I think I
 remember. Yet what shade's measure
 between remembrance's curling scent
 & nostalgia's stink? I ask like an
 answer's to be made or found. There
 is little but blood & consequence.

Was it Cambridge? I think I learned
 little, maybe nothing. The years from
 this courtyard to yonder sea. I wrote
 musics til wallet gone, breaths left.
 Now return to these tables & trees in
 their electric stars. Bells ring. Little, nothing.

Is it Cambridge? midst broken branches
 of endless war, I ask. Or just fear,
 another tide, dark tickling music about
 loss. Wounds pale, blood within strides on.
 If I lean in will a final word grasp
 my face & move my black stick?

Is it Cambridge? I am trying
 to remember. The lamps, the sirens,
 the striding skirts & beaus. What
 shade's measure between this hungry
 night & a thousand others on
 these bricks? Blood & consequence.

It is Cambridge. I know the books
 & money well. I know the clockpiece
 titan yonder & the stroll of rich ass
 below. The line of taxis, the piss
 of tramps, the puzzle among chessplayers
 & their laugh, grumbling resolve.

This is Cambridge, my old love, my
 clearest shivering melody for a
 pup's leaning years & perhaps an old
 scholar's to come. I came a thousand
 just to see tonight if so. A look, a kiss,
 release. I remember, fine, & move on.

xxvi. Feedback

The mystery is survival, tough
 the flesh & heart enough to bite
 a little, release a little, learn each
 hour's how. The years trench love's
 plain truths, chip & take in strands,
 ideals, bleed, break, mend, make.

The mystery is hope, again hustling
 up faith in new sun & fruit,
 in the brilliant breaths of music.
 Another wanting torso, arching ache, hope,
 near, mapless, another heart nods
 & smiles its notice, despair, sleep, rise, mate.

The mystery is desire, stroking a live
 piece of the world for pleasure, for effect,
 desire, grawing moonlight on lone winter's
 shore, sweet bowl of prayers, for time
 enough to breach the blunt divide of
 space & blood, colors, touch, music, wish.

The mystery is dream, closest to freedom,
 to death, where all bloods clean &
 rain the skies, where the broken softs
 & lessens, each hour a new mystery,
 what bravest to do? Find heart's inmost
 den, wake many wants deep from daylight.

The mystery is mystery, naming that
 spire God or cracking that fine ass,
 mystery, how breath can bark, sing,
 can say quietly: crush them now.
 Mystery more in kindness binds & love consumes,
 countless the books nor their men can explain.

xxvii. Blockage

Want is trigger, want is release, clue
 & code to what not shown by lights.
 What other, lighter world is dreaming
 you tonight? How far from maps
 kings move by measuring blood?

Trigger, release. Shade of young palms,
 shaking currents between new couple
 on a grimy bench, how far from years
 will trench love's plain truths? One hand
 learns a new one, begins to forget another.

A midnight scholar reaches far back
 for a kinder frame to the world & its
 gods, how chase its new sugars, how shed
 its shapely remains? Learns history teaches
 little but some dreams butcher others. Trigger, release.

What not shown by lights, not tonight
 nor a thousand morrows. Lovers' bench
 empty, scholar nears in dream his best hope,
 even the king rests gentle for an hour.
 World mulls kind the villain & stripling alike.

Gives breath like song for all. Trigger, release.

xxviii. Notes to a Later Morning

There is no cage but perspective.
 Two bodies crash on a distant road
 whether you exist or not.
 Sunny morning centuries ago a woman
 sang, her son slept in the folded clothes.
 No cage but history & presumption.
 Branches crystal snowflake hung
 with new meat, bound to no hour.
 Happiness is pleasure in presence. An empty
 field glaring hints through dream's door.

xxix. Blind Torso

Soft, yield the world, lose nothing,
bright in lash, sweet in tongue,
cool as a friend in sickness & song.
The worst comes, & comes new, world
bides its wicked, yield, with pretty ease,
lose nothing, you'll still bury with the rest.

Yield the world, soft, nothing lost,
in lone hours your best glowing text,
what not shown common by lights.
The worst comes, sometimes sweet
in tongue, a cool, wicked friend, soft,
yield, fine music in a sheered heart's hour.

Lose nothing, yield the world, soft,
perfection yearns you be its slave,
its losing bitch, its close to explain,
its magick shudders by your need to know,
your fury to raise & do. World's still stretching,
by dream & fist. Soft, yield. Nothing lost.

xxx. *Not Peace*

War becomes common one day, pain
 another scrub in the yard, despair
 an eventual way of easy breathing.
 Embattled dreams a yea to the worst
 of it all, & a question: when did wish
 for the next become want of what lost?

This is not peace. Calm bearded fanatic
 & his stained leaflet for every downtown
 soul, artful tracing a web of ending,
 a delicious nightmare of the saved
 & the soiled. Not peace. A clumsy knock
 back at him & he cries free speech
 for one & all! til the cages ready.

Tonight in the avenue glare & strange
 pressing bodies, the eager chew of
 hours, dark tickling music hues the
 air with its lyric about heart's rootless
 tangle, angry refrain about empire's
 pathless source. This is not peace.

War becomes common one day, its news
 blithely told from one sheered heart
 to the next. Kindness ranges down from
 shared drink to relaxed fists. From a
 calliope of faces like the sky's sparkling
 pool to maps of borders & waiting slaughter.
 This is not peace. What lost? What next?
 What mending waits for each & all?



To be continued in Cenacle | 65 | June 2008

G.C. Dillon



The Braided Pony

The Human army rode out of Elfland with less fanfare than they rode in with. No cheers, no boisterous crowds of flower-tossing Elves. They had just the greying sky and the electric scent of coming storms. One storm, a tempest of Goblins. They crossed the swiftly flowing, nameless stream and made camp.

“Your soldiers fight for gold. Or silver,” said Trecy, the troop’s Serjeant-at-arms. He was speaking with his leader about their sudden departure: the morning after the reception in Alfrodric’s court. “And the Elves do need our help against the Goblin Horde.”

“Elven gold fades like the morning dew. Believe me there is no pot at the rainbow’s end. Unless it’s a chamberpot,” replied the army’s captain. The commander of the Human Free Company was called Lord of Hotspur, but, in fact, that was the name of his huge broadsword, a massive bit of sharpened steel with twin flame-shaped guards at its hilt. The weapon hung down his back from a leather bandoleer.

“We can go back.”

“You think we should?!”

“I don’t think we should have left,” replied Trecy.

The captain rubbed his forehead. “I will tell you upon the morn.”

When his officer left, he laid his sword against the tent-pole, and lay himself down upon his cloth cot.

* * *

And he is in his dreams:

He sits upon his horse. His only favorite horse: a grey old nag, whom he brushes, shovels out the stall for, and feeds carrots to. It is the mount he rode as a squire, and the mare is long dead. Today, he had a puissant stallion. He didn’t know its name. Didn’t care.

“Come on, girl,” he says. They ride down the narrow street to the **Braided Pony Tavern**.

As he approaches, a landau pulls up. A tall male exits. It is Alfrodric the Elf Princeling. His ears have the fey points on them. Then Marianela comes out. Her blonde hair rests upon her bare, slender shoulders. She wears a kendall green kirtle and lacy white bodice. Her ears are rounded humanly. He comes here for her, because she asked him to. He follows them in, watches them at their table. He takes an ale from the barman. Should he go over? He doesn’t know? Why is she here with him? He decides to leave.

— She really screwed you over, Egbert. Didn’t she? asks an older man at the bar. He calls him by his birth name.

He turns, seeing two things above all else. First an old, scarred man. He sees himself. And in the mirror beyond the bar, he sees himself again, but a younger visage. A young man, without scars, and greyless hair. He is as he was once, and the speaker is as he is now.

“But you’re me? And I’m —”

— You’re twenty again, one year from the armour, and the coveted title of ‘sir’. But

no, I am not you, good knight. I am *Hotspur*. Your blade. But *who* would listen to a talking sword, even in a dream? I'm borrowing your good looks.

"How are you Hotspur? It's a piece of steel."

— Because I am a magic sword, silly. *Hotspur* to you, *Væ victus* to the scribbling scribes with their penned histories, *claidbeahm bhFiann* to the Sylvan Pixies, *Gelstong* to the Dwarfs. I like that one the best.

— You stiffed the bartender. Didn't tip him. Not even a pfennig. Always felt bad about that. Right? Wasn't his fault, but hers.

"I was embarrassed; I just wanted out of there," he said. "I saw her in the Elf-court. She hadn't aged a day."

— *Pshaw*. Just Elven magic. A pointy-eared parlor trick.

"I had asked her to the play by the Chamberlain's Men."

— Never liked lakers, *Hotspur* interjected, disparaging all actors.

"She said no, but then within a fortnight she said I should show up at the **Braided Pony**. She did! I asked the scullery maid what it meant. The old woman said Marianela had changed her mind.

— It wasn't an invitation, *Hotspur* said. Only a friendly suggestion. Even charwomen can be wrong. You wanted to set things right. I'll give you that.

Hotspur sips from his flagon of Zinfandel, and hooks a thumb back at the mirror above the bar. The mirror shows not a true reflection, but a long ago scene. He and Marianela are in the inner courtyard of the castle. What are the words his image is speaking?

"We had a misunderstanding. And I wasn't too nice to you. But I'm over that now."

— You lied. You were still angry, turning your embarrassment to rage. But then she made her attempt.

"Bertie," Marianela says, still in the mirror. "If you don't ever want to see me again that is alright. I understand. Maybe I led you on. I just need to know what you want."

— 'Led you on.' Not your term. You called her words you never called a woman before, and none since. Words you couldn't have accurately called a man. I'm impressed with the lexicon! But then I'm a sword.

"I never said it to her!"

— No, still you said it to your peers. She didn't know?

"I do not know if she did."

— Well, you saw her again. Didn't you? She did herself well. Consort to that Elf Prince.

And what did you do?

"I left."

— You took your toy soldiers and fled. It's not about shame or anger anymore, is it? I see that now. Once, maybe. But now it takes less of your courage to face the Goblins than it does to face her. She harmed you; a deeper cut than any gobic yataghan sabre could ever have delivered. You fear her more than dragons.

— Ah! Because no sword is between you two. I'm flattered, but you overestimate my prowess.

"I cannot harm her."

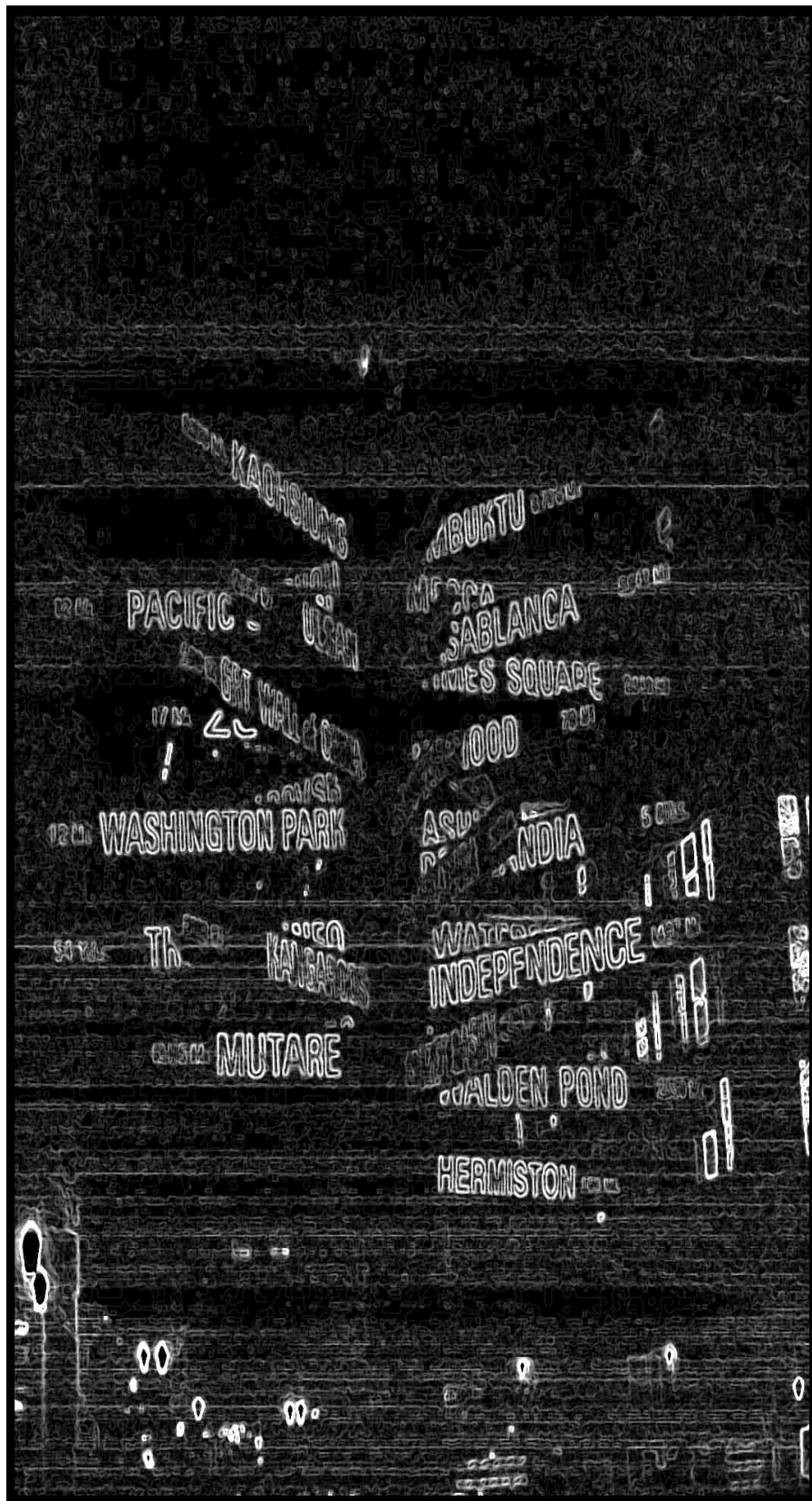
— And leaving didn't? Leaving physically now. Emotionally then. Or maybe I just don't understand your language well enough. But then I was only forged in a hot furnace and pounded straight on a hard anvil.

* * *

“Your orders, sir?” asked Trecy upon the morn.
— Just what are your orders? whispered *Hotspur* from its sheath on Egbert’s back.
“Mount up. We ride to Elfland.”

* * * * *





Judih Haggai



Open Call for Peace and Understanding

It's open
 door's wide open
 step in, step out
 all one roof, no roof
 We, who look up and see blue sky
 yes, it's us and it's now.
 Step into the world,
 a quiet welcome nurturing place
 where all we need exists
 where all we want is only what we need

where pure oxygen
 pure water
 and basic food
 is always around

where a look in the eye of another
 a heartfelt smile
 is always available

where no one needs to take from another
 unless the other one needs to give

open call, now
 open for living
 peace is here if we want it
 come on now
 you know we want it.

* * * * *

I Look at Your Photograph

Look at the flesh and sun-reflected life of your face
a casual smile from a wall in Tangiers
sudden collage of photographic artistry
a rich jump through the matrix of existence
again, the tears, I cry for the infinite truths
caught up in those finite years

You're gone
you and your subject
and probably the fine old wall

tears cause I knew you
smelled your humanity
held your complexity

I watched you eat a NY sandwich
and walk a NY park
cross the street to your NY destination

and now this photograph
and I feel your brilliance
a rush of longing for more than we're allowed

* * * * *

The Alpha Wave Waltz

breathing in the ions of energy
breathing deeper the ions of empathy
breathing in, breathing, breathing

breathing out the shattered constancies
breathing out the withered insidencies
breathing out, breathing, breathing

breathing the alpha wave waltz
dancing the alpha and beta wave waltz
chanting the waving waltz
playing the mantra again

* * * * *

Red Pepper

long curved shine
slick, sleek, fabulous
delicious in mouth
life surged pepper

illicitly brazen
fresh, clean, smooth, rough
bursting with gusto
how can mouth ever break away
olive oil elaboration
a little vinegar
how pepper can it get

* * * * *

What Would You Say?

What would you say
if you were offered a mountain
filled with red flowers, not poppies, but heavenly all the same
would you drop your life
your habitual this, that and musts
to slip on your hiking shoes
warm layers and free flying mind

would you say yes
would you rush into the fields and hills
would you leave your days without a thought
what would you say?

* * * * *

Boom Cracka Cracka

Searching for buried treasure
 rocket ploughs into earth
 alongside mother ficus
 her sweet tendrils caressing space
 all safe, we cling to medusa overgrowth
 all safe, we look into gaping hole

all safe, we hope we have heard the last
 boom cracka cracka clunk
 till another rocket lands

* * * * *





Jim Burke III

Editor's Note: The following is the twenty-sixth in an ongoing series derived from the correspondence between Jim Burke III and myself, begun in 1992, and in the spirit of the more enthused letter-writing tradition of yesteryear.

April 22, 2008
Earth Day
Hartford, Connecticut

Dear Ray,

Your last letter describing your trip to Burning Man was the inspiration I have been waiting for to write you and express my views, once more, on reality, life, technology, and the “real” reality. I wish I could have been there to experience the happening. The event made the news as it usually does every year. I recall the first couple of years when you started attending the festival [*First year attended: 1999—Ed.*] and the major news networks were somewhat taken aback to say the least. It was described as a gathering, as I clearly remember, but the true meaning escaped any journalistic foray and it was left for the viewer to decide what a “burning man” was, where the name originated, and what the reason for attending was. It was around 2005 or '06 that the event made the [national] news and that it was referred to as an artistic event. The article (it made the *Boston Globe* as well as the *Hartford Courant*) went on to quote one of the organizers as saying that the people that come express themselves freely, and without technological restraint, or words to that effect. By this time the “Burning Man” spirit had infested the news because, if for nothing else, the number of people it had attending caused the celebration to be referred to as taking place in a new “city.” The year that your letter describes, 2007, was accompanied by coverage that included the world media through radio, television, cinema, and the Internet. Although the latter had been used previously at Burning Man, this year’s was given more notoriety than eve. The city was planned months in advance and the notion of healing and expanding one’s spirit simultaneously was conveyed. The media used every means available to shed some light on the event to the general public, although I don’t believe Mr. & Mrs. Smith were (or are still) ready to even attempt to begin to assimilate it. One major difference occurred when, as alluded to in your letter, someone lit the man on fire early for reasons only he/she knows. This was covered briefly by the media and the people interviewed, who were associated with the event, simply stated: “we’re going to burn it again, as scheduled.” I do have an issue, however, with the technology that was used to explore “Burning Man.”

As you are aware, Ray, I have had my own battles with technology, especially during the last twenty years. My brief history of the technology includes using a slide rule (an obscure outdated method of computing various mathematical equations by adjusting two “rulers,” one mounted on top of the other, to their respective variables, and reading the result from a stationary rule on the bottom), which was replaced by a basic calculator, which was replaced by an advanced calculator, which was replaced by one that included exponential and trigonometric functions, and which was finally replaced by the computer.

I have long held that technology is exponential unto itself—that is, technology causes more and more advanced technology to be created not only *by* itself, but *for* itself and out of necessity. I also believe that it is closely tied to consumerism and that until our culture accepts a paradigm shift to economy (read this section of Thoreau’s *Walden*), our planet will remain in a world of shit as evidenced by global warming and resulting climate changes. I suppose I have become tempered by aging, and technology can have its place in certain fields such as medicine. I had an angioplasty six years ago and although, on the one hand, having a catheter snaked through one’s femoral artery into the heart to dissolve blockage is “cutting edge,” on the other being hooked up indefinitely to life support machines can bring the issue of “quality of life” to the surface. This phrase, I believe, is directly related to the individual’s versus the collective’s perception of the definition of what constitutes reality. *A priori*, the individual’s perception of reality is different because every personality is unique and, therefore, some components of the individual personality must be unique. However, some must be the same. Depending on the degree of personality traits that are common (as opposed to the uniqueness) in the collective (forgive me if I borrow a term from “fiction”), reality is formed and perpetuated. Our paradigm of consuming goes on beat after beat without a second thought. Even after viewing our own finite planet from above the atmosphere, and having taken measurements of our depleted ozone layer, the world’s collective is still numb. The earth is made of finite matter and only so much energy is available. This brings me to a point that I would like to share with you: will technology, taken to the extreme in any *necessary* form, create a solution for the present world crises? The use of gene splicing techniques could easily be applied to the general population to establish a “real reality” that would consist of an entrenchment in complacency. Personality traits so easily manipulated through alteration of the human genome. Cloning has taken place already, although not with humans, that we yet know of anyway. There are two possibilities open to our species that will occur within the next one hundred years: mankind will use available technology, work together, and create a “real reality” that the collective will use to grow closer to its ultimate goal of spiritual enlightenment and beyond, or it will perish into a collective of individual mushballs with the only commonality being greed. This planet will not survive and I would further argue that technology is eliminating any middle ground. The haves and the have-nots are growing farther apart, and the middle economic class is becoming obsolete. The elite will not require a middle class and as the ranks of the poor swell, the inevitable result will be chaos and revolution. Maybe this will be necessary to precede an paradigm shift to a spiritual outlook. Life and technology are so intertwined that to walk away from the latter is to doom the former, unless one wants to live like Henry David Thoreau, like me!

Peace + Love

- JBD

Raymond Soulard, Jr.



Notes from the Northwest

The following continues the series originally called Notes from New England, begun in issue 24-25 (Winter 1998), and resumed after a long absence in issue 59 (October 2006). It is intended as a gathering-place for observations of various lengths upon the world around me. It will be culled, like much of my writing, from my notebooks, and perhaps these thoughts will be expanded upon sometimes as well.

March 1, 2008
Portland, Oregon

Portland Museum of Art “The Dancer” Exhibition

Étoile

[Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, “Dancer Seated on a Pink Divan,” oil on canvas, 1885-1886]

You call the world an effect, how it leans in,
for a touch for a coin, something in purse
or pants. Sometimes trades back a heavy
promise called God, or a sate of loins,
or loneliness, maybe a song in green.

Worse, does not lean in, the hours pass silent
on a carriage, in café, a park, muted barks
through rented walls. Which, then, you ask,
grows a heart kinder again, unclenches
those still-grabbing fists no longer a babe’s?

I adjust these straps, look around again
for something, for the beauty you seek
for the rage you feel. I pose for you
because I cannot dance. I love for you
because the world gave me this body, &
this heart, & little good explanation.



March 2, 2008
Portland Oregon

Come this Tuesday night, the primaries in Ohio & Texas may decide the Democratic Party presidential nomination race between U.S. Senators Barack Obama & Hillary Clinton. Whether then or later it's clear that there will be a lot of pain & disappointment not only for one of these two, but also for their millions of supporters. There will need to be a healing in order to create more than a grudging unity. The one who concedes will set the tenor for this with the concession speech given. Will it be a strong endorsement of the victor? Will it bear the candidate's pledge to work for the other's victory, & an unalloyed urging for disappointed supporters to turn now to the November election with single purpose in bringing about victory? The one conceding must pledge every vein of support & vow to work tirelessly, & call for every supporter to do likewise.

The general opinion is that either Obama or Clinton will face a right-wing verbal shit-storm fueled by the corporate mainstream's love of a good, ugly, extended blood brawl. From the moment the Democratic nominee is known, no day, no hour must pass without a widespread readiness to respond, hit back harder, keep reminding everyone reading or watching that John McCain is no maverick but a ready & willing tool bent on continuing the years-long Bush regime wars on the world at large, & the poor & vulnerable in the U.S. He has & will carry it on. It must be stopped this year.

Further, the Democrats' control of Congress must be kept & expanded. The Republicans must be defeated, their current lead lunatics repudiated on every electoral level. No victory must be assumed nor any defeat deemed acceptable.

Tuesday may be when this begins, this long hard arc to Election Day on November 4, 2008. Healing the rifts & fortressing for what is next is a great hard task awaiting, but the fate of human hopes will be decided. Too scary & too fucking important all this, like it or not.



March 4, 2008
Portland Oregon

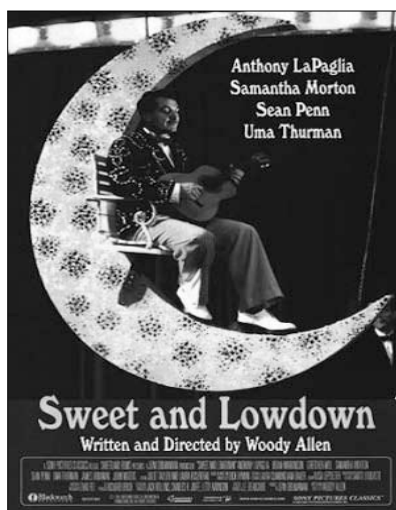
Woody Allen's *Cassandra's Dream* is his newest in a stretch of joyless, unimportant films, stretching back nearly a decade. He's taken recently to making crime dramas set in England, where he now lives. Casts, as always, top-level actors, & this time even engaged Philip Glass to score his project.

Why, then, does his work lack the remotest meaning or entertainment? Why is the dialogue wooden enough to re-populate a heavily logged forest, his characters instantly forgettable, his plots seeming cribbed from *CliffsNotes*? What happened to the excitement his every new film once generated? Funny, bleak, sometimes redemptive, sometimes not. How did he get so bad?

Woody Allen stopped making movies that matter to his audience because he stopped making movies that matter to *himself*. His territory was Manhattan, its artists & intellectuals, their ambitions & follies. He worked & re-worked this patch, & it fruited for him again & again. Some of his movies—such as *Annie Hall*, *Hannah & Her Sisters*, *Deconstructing Harry*, *Sweet & Lowdown*—are arguably masterpieces. The ones between these range from good to really good. For the better part of three decades he rarely stumbled or wasted anyone's time.

His affair with & marriage to Soon-Yi Previn, & the attendant notoriety, didn't fell him immediately—but apparently he resented it deeply & wanted his renown back at all costs. His last success was the trilogy of *Deconstructing Harry*, *Celebrity*, & *Sweet & Lowdown*—each angling uniquely at the artist's role in society. Funny, bitter, thoughtful. Since the beautiful & brilliant *Sweet & Lowdown*, Allen has foundered into a mishmash of efforts that plunder old ideas & stray even farther from the weightless genius of his earlier work. They tell nothing of who or what he is now, make little notice of this world, or any other, end their brief runs in movie theatres playing to dwindling numbers of old fans who can't let go of the memory of who Allen was for so many years.

Woody, tell the truth again, tell *your truth* again, in all its savage, dark, spiritual, funny, tragic ways. Stop making movies when once you made *Art*. Don't let your current run of disasters run on until when you pass, nobody will care, the mourning of who you were once having been going on for so long already. Tell your best & worst truths again before it's too late. Many more than you know are still waiting & hoping for you, & believe you still have it in you.



March 21, 2008
 11:11 p.m.
 Ava Roasteria
 Beaverton, Oregon

Dear Victor,

You asked me what the Jellicle Literary Guild is, what next week's meeting will be like, what I foresee, & to answer you rightly I have to do two things: use pen & paper, envelope & stamp; & reach years back in my history.

When I met you in Portland in 2002, I was... riding the end of a high wave til it crashed. Just months before I'd been living in Boston, been years living there, but had left in pursuit of a dream, to do with a girl, to do with living out West, to do with pursuing my Art to new spaces, see how far I could take it, & what I would give up for it.

The Jellicle Guild had been part of this left-behind life, & I did not expect it would occur again. When I began it in 1988, I was in graduate school in Connecticut, not yet even left my home state for Boston. I knew many friends from college who wrote, played music, read strange books, drank much booze, puffed ganja, & liked to push hard into the night; nights & days being lived in the nowhere that is central Connecticut & its endless cluster of same-looking towns & cities where the high-riding concerns were (& are still) taxes, cable TV, & the lottery numbers.

But we had something among us, this loose crew of students & teachers & freaks, living in the last exhaust of Reagan's America, & I wanted to push it. Then I read a book by Humphrey Carpenter, called *The Inklings*, & it hit. This book detailed the World War II & post-war literary cliques at Oxford & Cambridge Universities in England. In particular, "The Inklings," a small band of writers included J.R.R. Tolkien & C.S. Lewis. That was *it*. I'd gather my people up monthly, like the Inklings & their regular meetings, & we'd read & sing & grok each other.

Began in December 1988, & took awhile to cohere but eventually the shape developed as this: four times in the spring/early summer, & four times in the autumn/early winter, we'd gather in the back room of Roma's Restaurant in New Britain, Connecticut. An Italian/Polish joint, workingman's bar, good food & beer, & our bunch took over that brown-panelled room with notebooks & guitars, pitchers of beer, moments subtle & others ridiculous, & we'd wend our unscripted way from about 8 in the evening til the joint closed at 2.

People came & went over the years; I'd guess over a hundred people total but I could be wrong. I kept a few scribbled notes & tape-recorded many meetings. Captured of it all what I could for I *knew* it was special. Knew, Victor, that those gatherings in that obscure place, before the Internet allowed people to breach their surroundings & whatever kind of limitations it held for them...

Remembering: Jim Burke, the laughing mystic guitar player, lover of strong gins & tonic, & fine female ass; Mark Shorette, who wrote delicate, powerful poetry, a pacifist save when he screamed for blood while watching hockey games; Gerry Dillon, curly-haired writer of science fiction epics & lover of beauty & mayhem alike; Mark Bergeron, a 20th-century hippy poet/minstrel with the philosophical heart of a 17th-century scholar; Ralph Emerson, a tall, thoughtful man of far learning & possessing of an endlessly charming smile & laugh. I could list on for pages but suffice to say, I was one with my brothers & artists, & when I moved to Boston I met new brothers & brought them down too (save for the occasional meeting up there at lovely old Jacob Wirth's Restaurant): Ric Amante, savagely good poet,

lover of wine & song, dance, seer; Joe Ciccone, built like a pro fullback with a heart tender for the good melody & accompanying hobo tale; Michael McLoughlin, deep lover of 19th-century writers like Hawthorne & Melville, always one for the cigars, bourbon, & progressive metal bands when possible.

There were sisters, too, though fewer. Barbara Brannon, extraordinary artist, & Virginia Bergeron, also a great artist.

The nights began with food & drink, & then we would go around sharing what we'd written, read, thought, & songs & raw stories, & around a few more times. There would be a break, to hit the bar, the head, the ganja pipe. There would often be a crescendo of laughing, shouting, chairs falling, beer pitchers everywhere. Golden, wild nights.

Over 13 years, especially the last couple, the group disintegrated some. My own life up in Boston was sinking into depression, unemployment, isolation, & I probably brought some of this down with me, even as I brought new issues of *The Cenacle* & my notebooks. It ended because I was leaving the East, & it was time.

So, it's been over 5 years since the last meeting & you wonder what to expect at your first. I wonder, too, Victor, save to know that my instinct told me it was time & place to carry on, & begin again. We will begin, specifically, with some of my old ideas & memories, but where we go I cannot say. I hope & expect by night's end, however, to have honored what was those long years ago, & to have both raised their specter a little higher, & laid it a little more peaceably to rest.

Cannot wait!



April 7, 2008
 10:23 p.m.
 CoffeeTime—my chair
 Portland, Oregon

Dear Michael,

Thank you for sending me a group of your writings to read over, I appreciate the trust you are showing in me.

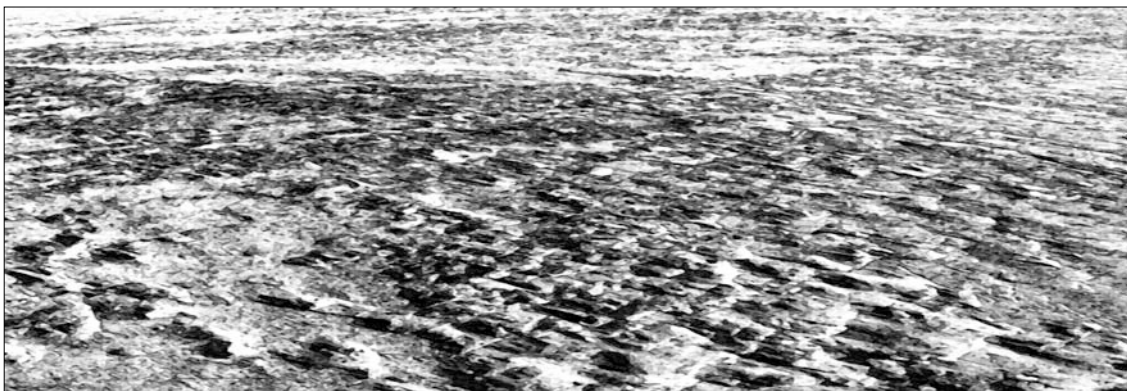
Here's what the years have taught me about others' opinions of one's Art: some will like your work, some will love it, some dislike it, some may hate it. You can't do jack about this, only do the best work you can & enjoy it to the fullest. What other choice in the end?

Some will try to win affection or respect through their Art, some even try to earn a living. This may work, may not, but the attempt to gain something from others will affect the work you do. At worst, others' responses will bloat in your mind, perhaps even at the cost of your own inner ear. It's a risk, even as there's risk in listening to nobody, showing your work to nobody.

There's no formula, no trick for doing good work, or gaining from others the most fruitful feedback. Everything affects everything else, each & all. All you can do is try & figure what "works" better or worse for you, & what impedes, what "feels" wrong.

So what then? Trust you can figure it out & want to make Art badly enough not to despair & quit; trust you can figure it out & willing shift as "it" shifts simply because you *can* & you *must*.

Whatever I think, say, critique, praise, suggest, cajole, matters only as much as you choose to let it matter, as useful as you find it to be. I am not the kind who believes any work of Art should be spanked for improvement. I'll try to climb inside your work & get a good feel for its interior, how your Art *sees* & *feels* & *interprets* the world. Perhaps then I will learn its language & perspective & know better & subtler when I think it is truest singing. I promise I will try.



April 14, 2008
Portland, Oregon

Scriptor Press Notes Toward a Business Model

- Publications & projects *not for sale* but gifted
- *Financing* either by Scriptor Press or non-interfering funding
- *Distribution*: Online, event, storefront, mail
- *Purpose*: Unlock clench commerce has on Art. Art is shaped, ambitious, expression — “ambitiously crafted expression”—& should not be locked into Western society’s exclusive *value for work* formula—worth measured by external value—externally determined value

1. *Worth is in presence, begins in simple presence* if presence is valued, when it is valued,
2. *Ambitiously crafted expression* can be taught, encouraged, nurtured
3. Suffering is *neither necessary nor* can it be *completely eliminated*
4. Art may *salve* when it cannot completely *heal*, & its making can foster *understanding, tolerance, empathy*
5. One tool for wielding human consciousness is artistic expression

I’ve thought about this a lot, trying to figure: OK, how in a society where space is sold, is commodity, & an individual’s worth is measured by externally determined values, do I do with my Art or Scriptor Press anything coherent not simply to oppose but offer different values?

It starts with not charging for my work or that I publish. Deciding that, & committing to it, is huge, & only a beginning. The impulse toward free, share, is an idealistic gesture, a child’s, a gesture in kindness to strangers who may take & neither understand the gesture nor value what received. “Free” may equal “worthless”

In dealing with this, two things: how the work is distributed, & the quality of the work, its art & craft, its packaging, its materials, how seriously it presents itself. Could be sold, good enough to be sold, & not sold. This seems to suggest private and/or alternative distribution.

Underground which stays underground *yet* learns the vastness of underground & travels it even better & wider

If I pursue this far enough, I can unrut myself. Right now I feel pushed up against an impediment.

A how & why that each answer partial.

If this life is it, & I do not know, & even if it isn’t, I still must figure out what to do with it. Ideas these but not quite more yet.







Dr. Albert Hofmann

How LSD Originated

from *LSD: My Problem Child*
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*In the realm of scientific observation,
luck is granted only to those who are prepared.*
—Louis Pasteur

Time and again I hear or read that LSD was discovered by accident. This is only partly true. LSD came into being within a systematic research program, and the “accident” did not occur until much later: when LSD was already five years old, I happened to experience its unforeseeable effects in my own body—or rather, in my own mind.

Looking back over my professional career to trace the influential events and decisions that eventually steered my work toward the synthesis of LSD, I realize that the most decisive step was my choice of employment upon completion of my chemistry studies. If that decision had been different, then this substance, which has become known the world over, might never have been created. In order to tell the story of the origin of LSD, then, I must also touch briefly on my career as a chemist, since the two developments are inextricably interrelated.

In the spring of 1929, on concluding my chemistry studies at the University of Zurich, I joined the Sandoz Company’s pharmaceutical-chemical research laboratory in Basel, as a co-worker with Professor Arthur Stoll, founder and director of the pharmaceutical department. I chose this position because it afforded me the opportunity to work on natural products, whereas two other job offers from chemical firms in Basel had involved work in the field of synthetic chemistry.

First Chemical Explorations

My doctoral work at Zurich under Professor Paul Karrer had already given me one chance to pursue my interest in plant and animal chemistry. Making use of the gastrointestinal juice of the vineyard snail, I accomplished the enzymatic degradation of chitin, the structural material of which the shells, wings, and claws of insects, crustaceans, and other lower animals are composed. I was able to derive the chemical structure of chitin from the cleavage product, a nitrogen-containing sugar, obtained by this degradation. Chitin turned out to be an analogue of cellulose, the structural material of plants. This important result, obtained after only three months of research, led to a doctoral thesis rated “with distinction.”

When I joined the Sandoz firm, the staff of the pharmaceutical-chemical department was still rather modest in number. Four chemists with doctoral degrees worked in research, three in production.

In Stoll’s laboratory I found employment that completely agreed with me as a research chemist. The objective that Professor Stoll had set for his pharmaceutical-chemical research laboratories was to isolate the active principles (i.e., the effective constituents) of

known medicinal plants to produce pure specimens of these substances. This is particularly important in the case of medicinal plants whose active principles are unstable, or whose potency is subject to great variation, which makes an exact dosage difficult. But if the active principle is available in pure form, it becomes possible to manufacture a stable pharmaceutical preparation, exactly quantifiable by weight. With this in mind, Professor Stoll had elected to study plant substances of recognized value such as the substances from foxglove (*Digitalis*), Mediterranean squill (*Scilla maritima*), and ergot of rye (*Claviceps purpurea* or *Secale cornutum*), which, owing to their instability and uncertain dosage, nevertheless, had been little used in medicine.

My first years in the Sandoz laboratories were devoted almost exclusively to studying the active principles of Mediterranean squill. Dr. Walter Kreis, one of Professor Stoll's earliest associates, launched me in this field of research. The most important constituents of Mediterranean squill already existed in pure form. Their active agents, as well as those of woolly foxglove (*Digitalis lanata*), had been isolated and purified, chiefly by Dr. Kreis, with extraordinary skill.

The active principles of Mediterranean squill belong to the group of cardioactive glycosides (glycoside = sugar-containing substance) and serve, as do those of foxglove, in the treatment of cardiac insufficiency. The cardiac glycosides are extremely active substances. Because the therapeutic and the toxic doses differ so little, it becomes especially important here to have an exact dosage, based on pure compounds.

At the beginning of my investigations, a pharmaceutical preparation with *Scilla* glycosides had already been introduced into therapeutics by Sandoz; however, the chemical structure of these active compounds, with the exception of the sugar portion, remained largely unknown.

My main contribution to the *Scilla* research, in which I participated with enthusiasm, was to elucidate the chemical structure of the common nucleus of *Scilla* glycosides, showing on the one hand their differences from the *Digitalis* glycosides, and on the other hand their close structural relationship with the toxic principles isolated from skin glands of toads. In 1935, these studies were temporarily concluded.

Looking for a new field of research, I asked Professor Stoll to let me continue the investigations on the alkaloids of ergot, which he had begun in 1917 and which had led directly to the isolation of ergotamine in 1918. Ergotamine, discovered by Stoll, was the first ergot alkaloid obtained in pure chemical form. Although ergotamine quickly took a significant place in therapeutics (under the trade name Gynergen) as a hemostatic remedy in obstetrics and as a medicament in the treatment of migraine, chemical research on ergot in the Sandoz laboratories was abandoned after the isolation of ergotamine and the determination of its empirical formula. Meanwhile, at the beginning of the thirties, English and American laboratories had begun to determine the chemical structure of ergot alkaloids. They had also discovered a new, water-soluble ergot alkaloid, which could likewise be isolated from the mother liquor of ergotamine production. So I thought it was high time that Sandoz resumed chemical research on ergot alkaloids, unless we wanted to risk losing our leading role in a field of medicinal research, which was already becoming so important.

Professor Stoll granted my request, with some misgivings: "I must warn you of the difficulties you face in working with ergot alkaloids. These are exceedingly sensitive, easily decomposed substances, less stable than any of the compounds you have investigated in the cardiac glycoside field. But you are welcome to try."

And so the switches were thrown, and I found myself engaged in a field of study that would become the main theme of my professional career. I have never forgotten the creative

joy, the eager anticipation I felt in embarking on the study of ergot alkaloids, at that time a relatively uncharted field of research.

Ergot

It may be helpful here to give some background information about ergot itself.[For further information on ergot, readers should refer to the monographs of G. Berger, *Ergot and Ergotism* (Gurney and Jackson, London, 1931) and A. Hofmann, *Die Mutterkornalkaloide* (F. Enke Verlag, Stuttgart, 1964). The former is a classical presentation of the history of the drug, while the latter emphasizes the chemical aspects.] It is produced by a lower fungus (*Claviceps purpurea*) that grows parasitically on rye and, to a lesser extent, on other species of grain and on wild grasses. Kernels infested with this fungus develop into light-brown to violet-brown curved pegs (sclerotia) that push forth from the husk in place of normal grains. Ergot is described botanically as a sclerotium, the form that the ergot fungus takes in winter. Ergot of rye (*Secale cornutum*) is the variety used medicinally.

Ergot, more than any other drug, has a fascinating history, in the course of which its role and meaning have been reversed: once dreaded as a poison, in the course of time it has changed to a rich storehouse of valuable remedies. Ergot first appeared on the stage of history in the early Middle Ages, as the cause of outbreaks of mass poisonings affecting thousands of persons at a time. The illness, whose connection with ergot was for a long time obscure, appeared in two characteristic forms, one gangrenous (*ergotismus gangraenosus*) and the other convulsive (*ergotismus convulsivus*). Popular names for ergotism—such as “mal des ardents,” “ignis sacer,” “heiliges Feuer,” or “St. Anthony’s fire”—refer to the gangrenous form of the disease. The patron saint of ergotism victims was St. Anthony, and it was primarily the Order of St. Anthony that treated these patients.

Until recent times, epidemic-like outbreaks of ergot poisoning have been recorded in most European countries including certain areas of Russia. With progress in agriculture, and since the realization, in the seventeenth century, that ergot-containing bread was the cause, the frequency and extent of ergotism epidemics diminished considerably. The last great epidemic occurred in certain areas of southern Russia in the years 1926-27. [The mass poisoning in the southern French city of Pont-St. Esprit in the year 1951, which many writers have attributed to ergot-containing bread, actually had nothing to do with ergotism. It rather involved poisoning by an organic mercury compound that was utilized for disinfecting seed.]

The first mention of a medicinal use of ergot, namely as an ecbolic (a medicament to precipitate childbirth), is found in the herbal of the Frankfurt city physician Adam Lonitzer (Lonicerus) in the year 1582. Although ergot, as Lonitzer stated, had been used since olden times by midwives, it was not until 1808 that this drug gained entry into academic medicine, on the strength of a work by the American physician John Stearns entitled *Account of the Putvis Parturiens, a Remedy for Quickening Childbirth*. The use of ergot as an ecbolic did not, however, endure. Practitioners became aware quite early of the great danger to the child, owing primarily to the uncertainty of dosage, which when too high led to uterine spasms. From then on, the use of ergot in obstetrics was confined to stopping postpartum hemorrhage (bleeding after childbirth).

It was not until ergot’s recognition in various pharmacopoeias during the first half of the nineteenth century that the first steps were taken toward isolating the active principles of the drug. However, of all the researchers who assayed this problem during the first hundred years, not one succeeded in identifying the actual substances responsible for the therapeutic

activity. In 1907, the Englishmen G. Barger and F. H. Carr were the first to isolate an active alkaloidal preparation, which they named ergotoxine because it produced more of the toxic than therapeutic properties of ergot. (This preparation was not homogeneous, but rather a mixture of several alkaloids, as I was able to show thirty-five years later.) Nevertheless, the pharmacologist H. H. Dale discovered that ergotoxine, besides the uterotonic effect, also had an antagonistic activity on adrenaline in the autonomic nervous system that could lead to the therapeutic use of ergot alkaloids. Only with the isolation of ergotamine by A. Stoll (as mentioned previously) did an ergot alkaloid find entry and widespread use in therapeutics.

The early 1930s brought a new era in ergot research, beginning with the determination of the chemical structure of ergot alkaloids, as mentioned, in English and American laboratories. By chemical cleavage, W. A. Jacobs and L. C. Craig of the Rockefeller Institute of New York succeeded in isolating and characterizing the nucleus common to all ergot alkaloids. They named it lysergic acid. Then came a major development, both for chemistry and for medicine: the isolation of the specifically uterotonic, hemostatic principle of ergot, which was published simultaneously and quite independently by four institutions, including the Sandoz laboratories. The substance, an alkaloid of comparatively simple structure, was named ergobasine (syn. ergometrine, ergonovine) by A. Stoll and E. Burckhardt. By the chemical degradation of ergobasine, W. A. Jacobs and L. C. Craig obtained lysergic acid and the amino alcohol propanolamine as cleavage products.

I set as my first goal the problem of preparing this alkaloid synthetically, through chemical linking of the two components of ergobasine, lysergic acid and propanolamine (see structural formulas in the appendix).

The lysergic acid necessary for these studies had to be obtained by chemical cleavage of some other ergot alkaloid. Since only ergotamine was available as a pure alkaloid, and was already being produced in kilogram quantities in the pharmaceutical production department, I chose this alkaloid as the starting material for my work. I set about obtaining 0.5 gm of ergotamine from the ergot production people. When I sent the internal requisition form to Professor Stoll for his countersignature, he appeared in my laboratory and reproved me: "If you want to work with ergot alkaloids, you will have to familiarize yourself with the techniques of microchemistry. I can't have you consuming such a large amount of my expensive ergotamine for your experiments."

The ergot production department, besides using ergot of Swiss origin to obtain ergotamine, also dealt with Portuguese ergot, which yielded an amorphous alkaloidal preparation that corresponded to the aforementioned ergotoxine first produced by Barger and Carr. I decided to use this less expensive material for the preparation of lysergic acid. The alkaloid obtained from the production department had to be purified further, before it would be suitable for cleavage to lysergic acid. Observations made during the purification process led me to think that ergotoxine could be a mixture of several alkaloids, rather than one homogeneous alkaloid. I will speak later of the far-reaching sequelae of these observations.

Here I must digress briefly to describe the working conditions and techniques that prevailed in those days. These remarks may be of interest to the present generation of research chemists in industry, who are accustomed to far better conditions.

We were very frugal. Individual laboratories were considered a rare extravagance. During the first six years of my employment with Sandoz, I shared a laboratory with two colleagues. We three chemists, plus an assistant each, worked in the same room on three different fields: Dr. Kreiss on cardiac glycosides; Dr. Wiedemann, who joined Sandoz around the same time as I, on the leaf pigment chlorophyll; and I ultimately on ergot

alkaloids. The laboratory was equipped with two fume hoods (compartments supplied with outlets), providing less than effective ventilation by gas flames. When we requested that these hoods be equipped with ventilators, our chief refused on the ground that ventilation by gas flame had sufficed in Willstätter's laboratory.

During the last years of World War I, Professor Stoll had been an assistant in Berlin and Munich to the world-famous chemist and Nobel laureate Professor Richard Willstätter, and with him had conducted the fundamental investigations on chlorophyll and the assimilation of carbon dioxide. There was scarcely a scientific discussion with Professor Stoll in which he did not mention his revered teacher Professor Willstätter and his work in Willstätter's laboratory.

The working techniques available to chemists in the field of organic chemistry at that time (the beginning of the thirties) were essentially the same as those employed by Justus von Liebig a hundred years earlier. The most important development achieved since then was the introduction of microanalysis by B. Pregl, which made it possible to ascertain the elemental composition of a compound with only a few milligrams of specimen, whereas earlier a few centigrams were needed. Of the other physical-chemical techniques at the disposal of the chemist today—techniques which have changed his way of working, making it faster and more effective, and created entirely new possibilities, above all for the elucidation of structure - none yet existed in those days.

For the investigations of *Scilla* glycosides and the first studies in the ergot field, I still used the old separation and purification techniques from Liebig's day: fractional extraction, fractional precipitation, fractional crystallization, and the like. The introduction of column chromatography, the first important step in modern laboratory technique, was of great value to me only in later investigations. For structure determination, which today can be conducted rapidly and elegantly with the help of spectroscopic methods (UV, IR, NMR) and X-ray crystallography, we had to rely, in the first fundamental ergot studies, entirely on the old laborious methods of chemical degradation and derivatization.

Lysergic Acid and Its Derivatives

Lysergic acid proved to be a rather unstable substance, and its rebonding with basic radicals posed difficulties. In the technique known as Curtius' Synthesis, I ultimately found a process that proved useful for combining lysergic acid with amines. With this method I produced a great number of lysergic acid compounds. By combining lysergic acid with the amino alcohol propanolamine, I obtained a compound that was identical to the natural ergot alkaloid ergobasine. With that, the first synthesis—that is, artificial production—of an ergot alkaloid was accomplished. This was not only of scientific interest, as confirmation of the chemical structure of ergobasine, but also of practical significance, because ergobasine, the specifically uterotonic, hemostatic principle, is present in ergot only in very trifling quantities. With this synthesis, the other alkaloids existing abundantly in ergot could now be converted to ergobasine, which was valuable in obstetrics.

After this first success in the ergot field, my investigations went forward on two fronts. First, I attempted to improve the pharmacological properties of ergobasine by variations of its amino alcohol radical. My colleague Dr. J. Peyer and I developed a process for the economical production of propanolamine and other amino alcohols. Indeed, by substitution of the propanolamine contained in ergobasine with the amino alcohol butanolamine, an active principle was obtained that even surpassed the natural alkaloid in its therapeutic properties. This improved ergobasine has found worldwide application as a

dependable uterotonic, hemostatic remedy under the trade name Methergine, and is today the leading medicament for this indication in obstetrics.

I further employed my synthetic procedure to produce new lysergic acid compounds for which uterotonic activity was not prominent, but from which, on the basis of their chemical structure, other types of interesting pharmacological properties could be expected. In 1938, I produced the twenty-fifth substance in this series of lysergic acid derivatives: lysergic acid diethylamide, abbreviated LSD-25 (Lyserg-säure-diäthylamid) for laboratory usage.

I had planned the synthesis of this compound with the intention of obtaining a circulatory and respiratory stimulant (an analeptic). Such stimulating properties could be expected for lysergic acid diethylamide, because it shows similarity in chemical structure to the analeptic already known at that time, namely nicotinic acid diethylamide (Coramine). During the testing of LSD-25 in the pharmacological department of Sandoz, whose director at the time was Professor Ernst Rothlin, a strong effect on the uterus was established. It amounted to some 70 percent of the activity of ergobasine. The research report also noted, in passing, that the experimental animals became restless during the narcosis. The new substance, however, aroused no special interest in our pharmacologists and physicians; testing was therefore discontinued.

For the next five years, nothing more was heard of the substance LSD-25. Meanwhile, my work in the ergot field advanced further in other areas. Through the purification of ergotoxine, the starting material for lysergic acid, I obtained, as already mentioned, the impression that this alkaloidal preparation was not homogeneous, but was rather a mixture of different substances. This doubt as to the homogeneity of ergotoxine was reinforced when in its hydrogenation two distinctly different hydrogenation products were obtained, whereas the homogeneous alkaloid ergotamine under the same condition yielded only a single hydrogenation product (hydrogenation = introduction of hydrogen). Extended, systematic analytical investigations of the supposed ergotoxine mixture led ultimately to the separation of this alkaloidal preparation into three homogeneous components. One of the three chemically homogeneous ergotoxine alkaloids proved to be identical with an alkaloid isolated shortly before in the production department, which A. Stoll and E. Burekhardt had named ergocristine. The other two alkaloids were both new. The first I named ergocornine; and for the second, the last to be isolated, which had long remained hidden in the mother liquor, I chose the name ergokryptine (kryptos = hidden). Later it was found that ergokryptine occurs in two isomeric forms, which were differentiated as alfa- and beta-ergokryptine.

The solution of the ergotoxine problem was not merely scientifically interesting, but also had great practical significance. A valuable remedy arose from it. The three hydrogenated ergotoxine alkaloids that I produced in the course of these investigations, dihydroergocristine, dihydroergokryptine, and dihydroergocornine, displayed medically useful properties during testing by Professor Rothlin in the pharmacological department. From these three substances, the pharmaceutical preparation Hydergine was developed, a medicament for improvement of peripheral circulation and cerebral function in the control of geriatric disorders. Hydergine has proven to be an effective remedy in geriatrics for these indications. Today it is Sandoz's most important pharmaceutical product.

Dihydroergotamine, which I likewise produced in the course of these investigations, has also found application in therapeutics as a circulation- and blood-pressure-stabilizing medicament, under the trade name Dihydergot.

While today research on important projects is almost exclusively carried out as

teamwork, the investigations on ergot alkaloids described above were conducted by myself alone. Even the further chemical steps in the evolution of commercial preparations remained in my hands—that is, the preparation of larger specimens for the clinical trials, and finally the perfection of the first procedures for mass production of Methergine, Hydergine, and Dihydergot. This even included the analytical controls for the development of the first galenical forms of these three preparations: the ampoules, liquid solutions, and tablets. My aides at that time included a laboratory assistant, a laboratory helper, and later in addition a second laboratory assistant and a chemical technician.

Discovery of the Psychic Effects of LSD

The solution of the ergotoxine problem had led to fruitful results, described here only briefly, and had opened up further avenues of research. And yet I could not forget the relatively uninteresting LSD-25. A peculiar presentiment—the feeling that this substance could possess properties other than those established in the first investigations—induced me, five years after the first synthesis, to produce LSD-25 once again so that a sample could be given to the pharmacological department for further tests. This was quite unusual; experimental substances, as a rule, were definitely stricken from the research program if once found to be lacking in pharmacological interest.

Nevertheless, in the spring of 1943, I repeated the synthesis of LSD-25. As in the first synthesis, this involved the production of only a few centigrams of the compound.

In the final step of the synthesis, during the purification and crystallization of lysergic acid diethylamide in the form of a tartrate (tartaric acid salt), I was interrupted in my work by unusual sensations. The following description of this incident comes from the report that I sent at the time to Professor Stoll:

Last Friday, April 16, 1943, I was forced to interrupt my work in the laboratory in the middle of the afternoon and proceed home, being affected by a remarkable restlessness, combined with a slight dizziness. At home I lay down and sank into a not unpleasant intoxicated-like condition, characterized by an extremely stimulated imagination. In a dreamlike state, with eyes closed (I found the daylight to be unpleasantly glaring), I perceived an uninterrupted stream of fantastic pictures, extraordinary shapes with intense, kaleidoscopic play of colors. After some two hours this condition faded away.

This was, altogether, a remarkable experience—both in its sudden onset and its extraordinary course. It seemed to have resulted from some external toxic influence; I surmised a connection with the substance I had been working with at the time, lysergic acid diethylamide tartrate. But this led to another question: how had I managed to absorb this material? Because of the known toxicity of ergot substances, I always maintained meticulously neat work habits. Possibly a bit of the LSD solution had contacted my fingertips during crystallization, and a trace of the substance was absorbed through the skin. If LSD-25 had indeed been the cause of this bizarre experience, then it must be a substance of extraordinary potency. There seemed to be only one way of getting to the bottom of this. I decided on a self-experiment.

Exercising extreme caution, I began the planned series of experiments with the smallest quantity that could be expected to produce some effect, considering the activity of the ergot alkaloids known at the time: namely, 0.25 mg (mg = milligram = one thousandth of a gram) of lysergic acid diethylamide tartrate. Quoted below is the entry for this

experiment in my laboratory journal of April 19, 1943.

Self-Experiments

4/19/43 16:20: 0.5 cc of 1/2 promil aqueous solution of diethylamide tartrate orally = 0.25 mg tartrate. Taken diluted with about 10 cc water. Tasteless.

17:00: Beginning dizziness, feeling of anxiety, visual distortions, symptoms of paralysis, desire to laugh.

Supplement of 4/21: Home by bicycle. From 18:00- ca.20:00 most severe crisis. (See special report.)

Here the notes in my laboratory journal cease. I was able to write the last words only with great effort. By now it was already clear to me that LSD had been the cause of the remarkable experience of the previous Friday, for the altered perceptions were of the same type as before, only much more intense. I had to struggle to speak intelligibly. I asked my laboratory assistant, who was informed of the self-experiment, to escort me home. We went by bicycle, no automobile being available because of wartime restrictions on their use. On the way home, my condition began to assume threatening forms. Everything in my field of vision wavered and was distorted as if seen in a curved mirror. I also had the sensation of being unable to move from the spot. Nevertheless, my assistant later told me that we had traveled very rapidly. Finally, we arrived at home safe and sound, and I was just barely capable of asking my companion to summon our family doctor and request milk from the neighbors.

In spite of my delirious, bewildered condition, I had brief periods of clear and effective thinking—and chose milk as a nonspecific antidote for poisoning.

The dizziness and sensation of fainting became so strong at times that I could no longer hold myself erect, and had to lie down on a sofa. My surroundings had now transformed themselves in more terrifying ways. Everything in the room spun around, and the familiar objects and pieces of furniture assumed grotesque, threatening forms. They were in continuous motion, animated, as if driven by an inner restlessness. The lady next door, whom I scarcely recognized, brought me milk—in the course of the evening I drank more than two liters. She was no longer Mrs. R., but rather a malevolent, insidious witch with a colored mask.

Even worse than these demonic transformations of the outer world, were the alterations that I perceived in myself, in my inner being. Every exertion of my will, every attempt to put an end to the disintegration of the outer world and the dissolution of my ego, seemed to be wasted effort. A demon had invaded me, had taken possession of my body, mind, and soul. I jumped up and screamed, trying to free myself from him, but then sank down again and lay helpless on the sofa. The substance, with which I had wanted to experiment, had vanquished me. It was the demon that scornfully triumphed over my will. I was seized by the dreadful fear of going insane. I was taken to another world, another place, another time. My body seemed to be without sensation, lifeless, strange. Was I dying? Was this the transition? At times I believed myself to be outside my body, and then perceived clearly, as an outside observer, the complete tragedy of my situation. I had not even taken leave of my family (my wife, with our three children had traveled that day to visit her parents, in Lucerne). Would they ever understand that I had not experimented thoughtlessly, irresponsibly, but rather with the utmost caution, and that such a result was in no way foreseeable? My fear and despair intensified, not only because a young family should lose its

father, but also because I dreaded leaving my chemical research work, which meant so much to me, unfinished in the midst of fruitful, promising development. Another reflection took shape, an idea full of bitter irony: if I was now forced to leave this world prematurely, it was because of this Iysergic acid diethylamide that I myself had brought forth into the world.

By the time the doctor arrived, the climax of my despondent condition had already passed. My laboratory assistant informed him about my self-experiment, as I myself was not yet able to formulate a coherent sentence. He shook his head in perplexity, after my attempts to describe the mortal danger that threatened my body. He could detect no abnormal symptoms other than extremely dilated pupils. Pulse, blood pressure, breathing were all normal. He saw no reason to prescribe any medication. Instead he conveyed me to my bed and stood watch over me. Slowly I came back from a weird, unfamiliar world to reassuring everyday reality. The horror softened and gave way to a feeling of good fortune and gratitude, the more normal perceptions and thoughts returned, and I became more confident that the danger of insanity was conclusively past.

Now, little by little I could begin to enjoy the unprecedented colors and plays of shapes that persisted behind my closed eyes. Kaleidoscopic, fantastic images surged in on me, alternating, variegated, opening and then closing themselves in circles and spirals, exploding in colored fountains, rearranging and hybridizing themselves in constant flux. It was particularly remarkable how every acoustic perception, such as the sound of a door handle or a passing automobile, became transformed into optical perceptions. Every sound generated a vividly changing image, with its own consistent form and color.

Late in the evening my wife returned from Lucerne. Someone had informed her by telephone that I was suffering a mysterious breakdown. She had returned home at once, leaving the children behind with her parents. By now, I had recovered myself sufficiently to tell her what had happened.

Exhausted, I then slept, to awake next morning refreshed, with a clear head, though still somewhat tired physically. A sensation of well-being and renewed life flowed through me. Breakfast tasted delicious and gave me extraordinary pleasure. When I later walked out into the garden, in which the sun shone now after a spring rain, everything glistened and sparkled in a fresh light. The world was as if newly created. All my senses vibrated in a condition of highest sensitivity, which persisted for the entire day.

This self-experiment showed that LSD-25 behaved as a psychoactive substance with extraordinary properties and potency. There was to my knowledge no other known substance that evoked such profound psychic effects in such extremely low doses, that caused such dramatic changes in human consciousness and our experience of the inner and outer world.

What seemed even more significant was that I could remember the experience of LSD inebriation in every detail. This could only mean that the conscious recording function was not interrupted, even in the climax of the LSD experience, despite the profound breakdown of the normal world view. For the entire duration of the experiment, I had even been aware of participating in an experiment, but despite this recognition of my condition, I could not, with every exertion of my will, shake off the LSD world. Everything was experienced as completely real, as alarming reality; alarming, because the picture of the other, familiar everyday reality was still fully preserved in the memory for comparison.

Another surprising aspect of LSD was its ability to produce such a far-reaching, powerful state of inebriation without leaving a hangover. Quite the contrary, on the day after the LSD experiment I felt myself to be, as already described, in excellent physical and mental condition.

I was aware that LSD, a new active compound with such properties, would have to be of use in pharmacology, in neurology, and especially in psychiatry, and that it would attract the interest of concerned specialists. But at that time I had no inkling that the new substance would also come to be used beyond medical science, as an inebriant in the drug scene. Since my self-experiment had revealed LSD in its terrifying, demonic aspect, the last thing I could have expected was that this substance could ever find application as anything approaching a pleasure drug. I failed, moreover, to recognize the meaningful connection between LSD inebriation and spontaneous visionary experience until much later, after further experiments, which were carried out with far lower doses and under different conditions.

The next day I wrote to Professor Stoll the above-mentioned report about my extraordinary experience with LSD-25 and sent a copy to the director of the pharmacological department, Professor Rothlin.

As expected, the first reaction was incredulous astonishment. Instantly a telephone call came from the management; Professor Stoll asked: "Are you certain you made no mistake in the weighing? Is the stated dose really correct?" Professor Rothlin also called, asking the same question. I was certain of this point, for I had executed the weighing and dosage with my own hands. Yet their doubts were justified to some extent, for until then no known substance had displayed even the slightest psychic effect in fraction-of-a-milligram doses. An active compound of such potency seemed almost unbelievable.

Professor Rothlin himself and two of his colleagues were the first to repeat my experiment, with only one-third of the dose I had utilized. But even at that level, the effects were still extremely impressive, and quite fantastic. All doubts about the statements in my report were eliminated.

* * * * *



Notes on Contributors

Nemo Boko lives in Portland, Oregon. His artwork last appeared in *The Cenacle* | 62 | June 2007. He can be found fermenting art and revolution at: <http://dreamrevolution.org/NemosUtopia>. He recently told me a story about how some artists these days will literally sell their own names to make a living. He has not done this yet, and I do not believe that he will.

Jim Burke III lives in Hartford, Connecticut. His writing last appeared in *The Cenacle* | 60 | December 2006. He came up with the idea to appear at the next Jellicle Literary Guild via the telephone. By when this issue appears, this experiment will have played itself out, and he will have sent his guitar ringing, telephonically, across the continent.

Joseph Campbell was born in 1904 in White Plains, New York, and went on to become a major writer and lecturer in the fields of comparative mythology and comparative literature. He died in 1987. His essay in this issue is from *Flight of the Wild Gander: Explorations in the Mythological Dimension*, and also appeared in Scriptor Press's Burning Man Books series in 2007.

Joe Ciccone lives in Boston, Massachusetts, or at least is in the process of moving back there. His work last appeared in *The Cenacle* | 46 | June 2001. What a long time between appearances. When last we spoke years ago, I was freefalling into the unknown. I think he was too. Yet here we've crossed tracks again, the years gone by, and it seems many more to come between us.

G.C. Dillon lives in Plainville, Connecticut. His work last appeared in *The Cenacle* | 63 | December 2007. His work also often appears in *Aphelion Webzine* (<http://www.aphelion-webzine.com>). I believe him to be one of those writers whose work will only get stronger the older they get, the more time and devotion they give to it.

Judih Haggai lives at Kibbutz Nir Oz in Israel. Her work last appeared in *The Cenacle* | 63 | December 2007. She and I have been collaborators and friends at half a world away for many years now, and when I think of those whose door I have landed at in times of stress and comfort both, at least in my own mind, she is among a select few.

Dr. Albert Hofmann, born January 11, 1906 in Baden, Switzerland, was a prominent scientist and best known for synthesizing LSD-25 in 1943. His work was last reprinted in this publication in *The Cenacle* | 57 | April 2006. He died April 29, 2008, at the age of 102. Many point to his long, fruitful, and productive life as one indication that LSD can't be all bad despite what you may hear.

Kassandra Soulard lives in Portland, Oregon. She is sleeping right now, after spending hours sitting with me to bring our friend Nemo's artwork to the cover of this issue in the most respectful and fascinating way we were capable of. I think she walks around with more heavy thoughts than almost anyone I know, and yet her touch for a loved one or someone in need is ever light and beautiful.

Raymond Soulard, Jr. lives in Portland, Oregon. It's been some years since I stayed up all night in order to finish a new issue of *The Cenacle* before debuting it at a Jellicle Literary Guild meeting. So long, in fact, that that next step, pushing the new issue out into the world in paper and electronic form, did not exist yet. So glad this issue is nearly done, and its distribution method has nicely complexified.

Michael Van Kleeck lives in Portland, Oregon. He is a welcomed new contributor to this publication. He claims that when "he's not chronicling the Resurrection of the American Dream on the streets of Portland, he can be found just about anywhere in the American West, in Amsterdam, in Berlin, in Scotland and Manchester and Prague, and in the middle of unexpected dreams everywhere."



*...back on the streets later on tonight, blankets in his bag,
just got in from New York City, sick of this shit, will take day work,
it's fucking cold here nights, threw out his long johns, missing them,
says everyone in NYC sleeps in cardboard boxes near churches, safest place . . .*

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE